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NORTH AMERICAN  
STORES



ACCELERATING MUSIC AND CULTURE

76 APRIL 2004

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LUOMO OUT OF LUCK

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A|X SOUTH BEACH RELEASE **03.06.04**

NATIONAL RELEASE IN STORE AND ONLINE **03.25.04**

A|X

ARMANI EXCHANGE

# EVERY HAS A STORY

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## 1984

After winning bronze in the 4x100m relay, British athlete Simone Jacobs attends the closing ceremony. She is so mesmerised by the evening's entertainment that she 'loses' her shirt.

The next day, as the event manager sorts through the undergarments thrown onto the stage, he finds a Great Britain track vest.

Following strict sanitary guidelines, he sends the garments to the local cleaners.

While being bulk washed, the vest accidentally lands in the wrong laundry bin.

It clings to the inside lining of a suit jacket belonging to successful import-export businessman Wong Ho.

Made of a fine nylon blend, the vest discharges a small amount of static electricity, causing what is commonly known as 'static cling'.

Three weeks later, Mr. Ho arrives in a central African country on business.

He is immediately detained after insulting a top government official.

Wong Ho spends the next 19 years in a small room as the government's 'most special guest'.

In some cultures, this gesture means "HELLÖ". In others, it means "I rub elephant excrement in your face".

## 2003

While going through his personal effects upon release, Mr. Ho discovers the vest. Wanting to return it to its original owner, Mr. Ho checks the hang tag and attempts to contact 'Mr. adidas'.

adidas offers Mr. Ho a deal to trade the vest for a plane ticket home, along with the opportunity to appear in an upcoming advertisement.

Familiar with the custom of saving face, Mr. Ho never questions why Mr. adidas would have ever owned a woman's track vest.

## 2004

Finally reunited with the original '84 Great Britain track vest, adidas reintroduces it with the 2004 Originals collection, available online at [adidas.com/originals](http://adidas.com/originals)



1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6



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Hello

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FIDDLE ME THIS, BATMAN: AMP FIDDLER  
IMAGE WILL CALCUTT

Shot on location at Julian Scott Luxury Department Store, Downtown Detroit. Clothing: Mark England Collection for Julian Scott. Styling: Jocayne Nimmaman for Julian Scott; Make-up: Jennifer James for Julian Scott; Coiffure: [unreadable]



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photo: Elean Cole

ED'S RANT 04.04

## ED'S RANT



### DOWNWARD MOBILITY

With a scratch of its glittery fur coat, San Francisco nightlife goes into a bear-like hibernation during winter. However, even on an average Wednesday evening during the season, it's easy to find at least a dozen bars and clubs showcasing four-deck hip-hop scratch-a-thons, clap-and-boogie house, funk-fused breaks, spindly electronica or mashed up retro and electro tracks. It's puzzling, though, why fewer souls go out between January and April. Fellow DJs I know put it down to the rise in pre-winter "it's cold, so let's hook up" relationships of convenience; that, plus college is back in session while some punters are financially wiped out after holiday spending sprees.

Apart from a few wet nights, the occasional freak windstorm and mildly frosty conditions, weather is not a factor. Lets face it: San Francisco lies at sea level. We're not battling snow flurries or icy sidewalks to get from our doorsteps to the bar. So, how do I normally get to Wednesday night's Red Wine Social for a midnight toast to deceased *SF Chronicle* scribe Herb Caen, and to play back-room quarters poker and see the overhead lamps sway in time to *XLR8R* columnist Toph One's feral hip-hop sets at Mission district cocktail dive Dalva? San Francisco Municipal Transit—we call it Muni for short—our system of buses, trolleys, cable and streetcars.

The best way to see San Francisco is by bus. These mostly electric-powered hulks run north to south, from the former military barracks of the Presidio near the Golden Gate Bridge down to the shipyards and industrial warehouses of Hunters Point. They run east to west from Bayfront skateboarding mecca Embarcadero Plaza through green and wooded Golden Gate Park, disembarking at the Pacific Ocean.

For a \$1.25 fare, there's at least five decent Owl lines that'll take you around the city in a circle from 12:30AM to 6AM. So there's no excuse to *not* go and hear Toph play Pete Rock, Lyrics Born and some new demo Tommy Guerrero just made. Bikes, cabs, buses and streetcars are there for us to make plans, make bets and make out in, so why not get mobile?

The artists we feature this issue are equally un-static. It reminds me of the lengths to which we all go for music now—from attending festivals in California deserts to raiding desolate global outposts for illegal mp3 downloads; or, in our case, doing photo shoots. The coordination of these takes a minimum of three parties (press relations officer, artist, photographer, etc.) exchanging emails and phone calls for a couple of weeks all to make sure X, Y and Z meet and the shoot happens.

For instance, Amp Fiddler was on tour in Paris and the UK, and only had a small window of time back in his native Detroit for us to photograph him. Ayro's Jeremy Ellis had split Motown to record an album in Puerto Rico. Jeff Mills, who resides in New York, was snapped while on tour in London. Ty was also shot in London, Luomo in Berlin and Black Strobe in France. You practically have to have a wall-sized world map and a GPS to make a music magazine these days. As a result, expect to see more magazines migrate online, as happened recently with the UK's excellent (now quarterly) *Jockey Slut*.

In the future, will we even bother to go to the newsstand or click a button to subscribe to paper-based publications? This dilemma recalls the "death of vinyl" debates of the late '90s. Does technology improve art or just usurp it? As a plethora of new file formats and listening devices emerge, will the art and commerce that emerges to fill them be but surplus bits of diluted data? As life speeds up, do we gain momentum or lose control careening around its hairpin turns? I'd love to debate you about it right now, but I can't. I've got a bus to catch.

-Tomas, th' Ed.

CARL HYNDMAN PHOTO



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TRAVIS BARKER

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# TV On The Radio



## desperate youth, blood thirsty babes

This new offering picks up where their EP Young Liars left off; which is to say, in complete silence. Seconds later, a broken saxophone sparks a rusty flame over superhero psycho bop and we're in it to win it.



Nine songs about (in no particular order) — discordant living, misrepresentation, how nothing nothing can be, life, afterlife, love and love "after hours". Scandalous.

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### STAFF BOX 04.04

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**ON THE COVER:** Amp Fiddler by Will Calcutt; diamonds and moths by NoPattern

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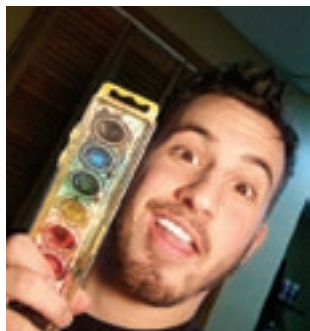
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### CHUCK NOPATTERN

Chuck Anderson is an illustrator/designer from the Chicago area. After graduating high school in 2003, he worked as a screenprinter and is now a full-time freelancer working with XLR8R, Triple Five Soul, Smartbar Chicago, Hydragaphik, and others. When not browsing his favorite issue of *Ebony* magazine or watching *The Bachelor* with his girlfriend, he is sitting in front of the computer updating his website. [www.nopattern.com](http://www.nopattern.com)



### WILL CALCUTT

In the late '90s Will was the recipient of the Zac Abeel Award for Courage and he currently holds the Theakston/Damerow Manlight Grant for 2003-2004. A graphic designer and photographer living in Detroit, Will's designs are most often found serving Ghostly International releases and his photographic work has been published in outlets like *The New York Times*, *De: Bug*, *Jockey Slut* and *Rob's Blog*. He is approximately one-quarter Belgian.



### DAVE STENTON

Dave Stenton is based in London but was born and spent his school years in Cyprus—he doesn't speak Greek, but he thanks you for asking. When he's not writing for XLR8R, he is a music publicist, DJ, and a regular contributor to British magazines *Flux* and *iDJ*. Dave only realized very recently how difficult it is to write about yourself—in fact, he could have reviewed three albums in the time it took to pen this.



### DAVID WEISSBERG

XLR8R bids a fond farewell to the most excellent David Weissberg, creative director of the magazine for over three years. Best known for his skill with the mouse and keys, eye for originality, editorial insight and the occasional crass remark about the underprivileged, DJW will sincerely be missed. However, he'll still be stopping in from time to time, so keep an eye out.

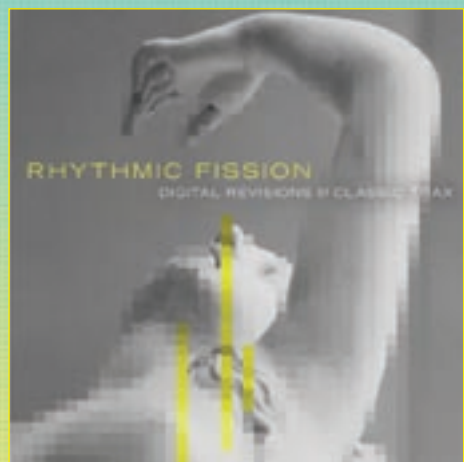


IN STORES NOW

### CLUB SODADE CESARIA EVORA BY...

Featuring remixes by renowned DJs: Carl Craig • Pepe Bradock • Keri Chandler • Señor Coconut • François K. • 4 Hero • Cris Prolific • DJ Rork & Demon Ritchie • Osunlade • Château flight

A beautiful and hypnotic tribute to recent Grammy Award winner Cesaria Evora with deep house, club, and drum'n'bass interpretations of her best work!



IN STORES APRIL 6TH, 2004

### RHYTHMIC FISSION DIGITAL REVISIONS OF CLASSIC TRAX

*fis-sion(n)*: a reaction where a nucleus splits into usually two fragments of comparable mass, releasing several hundred million electron volts of energy.

*Rhythmic Fission* is an intense meld of classical works and electronica grooves for the active listener, featuring renowned DJs Tracy Young, Dan the Automator, and Hambucker versus Sofa Surfers reworking well-known and obscure pieces by composers such as Ravel and Bach, as well as Edgard Varèse and Alban Berg.

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for more info please visit: [www.k7.com](http://www.k7.com) | [www.funkstörung.com](http://www.funkstörung.com)

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Kings of Convenience frontman Erlend Oye revolutionizes the DJ mix by adding his sublime vocals to some of the most cutting edge electronic tracks in the world.

Erlend Oye "DJ Kicks" out 4.20.04

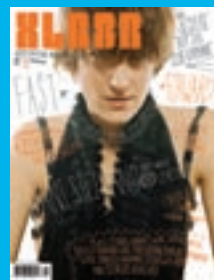
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## LETTERS

LIKE US? HATE US? WRITE US!  
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All letters printed "as is."



## COUNTRY GRAMMAR

In your year-end issue (#73, December 2003), there was a section of "Bests and Worst" of 2003 where King Britt stated that one of the worst things about 2003 was Southern rap. He follows this by using African-American Southern vernacular as an example of something that is hindering the progress that black people have made. I know his views are not those of XLR8R, so it ain't really about y'all, but it is about how white supremacy and Eurocentric values have a lot of uppity, bougie black folks making snide comments about a culture they don't understand, despite being black themselves.

King Britt does not have to like Southern rap! But he does have to respect the fact that a lot of black people who do not come from Philadelphia don't speak like him. This does not set black people back, especially if that is the way that they learned to talk from their family and community!

I read a lot of these "alternative" magazines 'cause I'm into the music they promote. It never fails that an artist or writer in some backwards way shows that they don't come from the same ethnicity, culture or class as I do. Maybe their parties and concerts are not filled with 24-year old African American males from East Oakland, but y'all gotta know that you do have readers that are from the ghetto. They see some of the ways that black culture is being ridiculed through masked racism. This is the same racism that exists that keeps certain electronica artists (like Britt) from prospering in the industry the way white artists have!

So next time Britt's boosie ass (that's East Oakland for wack) writes something, he should think about how this language is not his black peoples' original language!

Peace,  
Whiz

## King Britt responds:

Most Southern rap is very derogatory. I am from the streets of Southwest Philly. There is nothing uppity about me, and I know that certain language is used to communicate and it stays in our community as a code, so to speak. This dates back to slave days. But when you are selling millions of records, you have a responsibility to our people and history to represent yourself in a positive way. That means no degrading of women and showing our people in a positive light instead of emphasizing material things like rims, money, jewelry and alcohol. We have too many young black boys and girls who fall into the cycle of emulating the bullshit they see in videos. It's not just Southern rap videos, but I chose that as an example because I haven't seen any positive ones. I let my daughter watch a Lil' Jon video and she couldn't believe how awful it was. She is nine and she said, "Why do all the girls have their breasts out?" If you can touch that many people, say something! Don't perpetuate the Amos and Andy stereotype—change it!

As for electronic, I do more than that—I was also in Dignable Planets and Sylk130. We did our mission there, and now it's time to do it in the electronic world!

## CORRECTIONS:

In #74's "The Digital Divide," we attributed the video for the Postal Service's "The District Sleeps Alone Tonight" to Rob Fong. It was made by Feng and Trevin Matcek under the alias Cobra Kai. In #74's 2-step singles reviews, we called DJ Love (of "Contact: The Remixes" on Rat Records) a Brit. He is from Dallas, Texas.



Photo: Dean Richards, www.aflifebyday.com

## BITTER BASTARD

## BITTER BASTARD'S BUTT SUCKIN' TOP 10

Even the sun peaking through the dark rain clouds can't derail BJ "Bitter" Bastard's hailstorms of hateration. And intestinal gas, back-to-back deadlines and being a dander/ragweed/pollen don't help either. What does the Bastard do when things get even more crap than usual? Bastard sits back with a nice warm cup of bile and rants. Ahhh...that really does the trick.

**1. Sublow, Grimey, 8-bar** Note to two-step producers: 200 obscure micro-genres do not legitimacy make. But at least none of them contains the word progressive.

**2. Ryan McGinley, Ryan McGinness, Glynnis McDarris, Geoff McFettridge** You have to be Scottish—or from New York—to remember which one of these hipster artists is which.

**3. Taxes** How ridiculous does it feel to be paying taxes when you make, like, \$12,000 a year? They might as well just come and take your laundry money out of that little jar you keep it in.

**4. Dancestar USA Awards** With P. Diddy performing last year and celebrity nominees that include Paris Hilton and Christina Aguilera, even the Grammys is more underground than this WMC-based farce. And "democratic" voting—via your cellphone—only costs \$1 a call. May the artists with the richest friends win.

**5. Folktronica** Way to make electronic music unsexier than it already is. We're just picturing DJ Nobody and the Notwist's Markus Acher sitting around in flared Levis listening to Cat Stevens on the hi-fi and it's *toooo precious!*

**6. Art damage(d)** Time was, every idiot with Cakewalk thought they could make electro. Nowadays, any fool with a cracked copy of Pro Tools is trying to make glitch punk. It's the revenge of all the people who didn't like to dance at raves—now they're trying to make your ears bleed. Special delivery for Secret Mommy, Hearts of Darknesses and Otto Von Schirach: you can turn your computers off now.

**7. Life-altering** Does it disturb anyone else that Iggy Pop's "Lust for Life" is the soundtrack for Carnival Cruise Lines? I just keep picturing Iggy showing up to one of those buffet dinners they have on cruises in a soiled diaper, spitting in the creamed corn and then wanting everyone to limbo.

**8. Grumpy English people** Grumpy English people are so over. Stop whining about your weather, your food, your eternal ennui, not having enough fags, and damn near everything else. Your country doesn't even have natural disasters, you pussies. You're almost as bad as blasé German people, who love to act as though Berlin is no more exciting than, say, Grinnell, Iowa.

**9. Babies** Babies are the new dogs. Seriously, though, it really melts your Sno-Cone when you ask some techno freak like T. Raumschmiere or Marumari what they're inspired by and instead of saying nipples or Almodovar films or Russian mail-order brides, they say "my kid."

## 10. Bad Drawing

Okay, okay, this whole doodling craze was hot in graphic design for a minute, but now all kinds of people who couldn't even draw a Metallica logo on their Trapper Keeper with a stencil are trying to make purposely naïve art. Guess what? You're not fooling anyone.

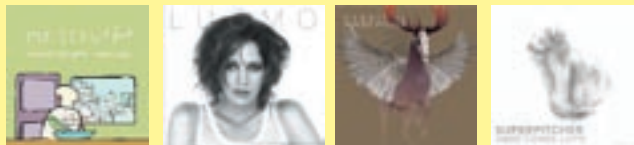
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## XLR8R'S "LEGENDS" CONTEST

Who says you can't be a part of XLR8R's Winter Music Conference happenings this year? We're taking **Legends**, our 2004 WMC event, beyond South Beach by offering the chance to win a package of goods from the artists scheduled to fill the XLR8R dancefloor. Five winners will receive a **Mr. Scruff** t-shirt, a Mr. Scruff puzzle and a **SweetSmoke** DVD from the fabulous Ninja Tune label, a copy of **Luomo**'s new release, *The Present Lover*, on Kinetic Records, **Stacey Pullen**'s mix from the Fabric series, and the new album from Kompakt's groundbreaking **Superpitcher**. Winners will be chosen at random, and all you have to do is send us your name, address and email.

Entries will be accepted via mail and email. Send your answers to XLR8R's "Legends" Contest, 1388 Haight St., #105, San Francisco, CA 94117 or email them to [contest@xlr8r.com](mailto:contest@xlr8r.com). Include your name, return address and email address when you enter. Entries must be received by April 30, 2004.



TECHNICS PRESENTS

# LEGENDS

THE OFFICIAL XLR8R MIAMI CONFERENCE EVENT  
TUESDAY, MARCH 9 2004

Michael Mayer (Kompakt)  
Superpitcher (Kompakt)  
Stacey Pullen (Fabric & Black Flag)  
Luomo (Kinetic)  
Mr. Scruff (Ninja Tune)  
Telefon Tel Aviv (Hefty)  
Syrup Girls (XLR8R)  
Romanowski (Future Primitive Sound)

Goddess, 681 Washington Ave, South Beach  
10pm-4am; \$20

**Technics** XLR8R



## FRIDAY, MARCH 5

### TRANSATLANTIC 3: THE GARAGE MASHUP

"All Sounds that Emerge from the Garage Underground"

DJ 99	DJ Cooper
DJ Hyst	Ed Um
G. Notorius	Jason Mundo
Richness	Syrup Girls (Star Eyes & Siren)
T.S. Heritage	

The Marlin Bar, 1200 Collins Ave, South Beach; 10pm-5am; \$5

## SATURDAY, MARCH 6

### THE BLUE NOTE REVISITED LOUNGE

Presented by: Blue Note & XLR8R, in association with Aqua-booty, Kimco Entertainment & On Pointe Music

Bugz in the Attic	Dixon
DJ Spinna	Jazzanova
Kenny Dope	Daniel W. Best

Goddess, 681 Washington Ave, Miami Beach; 10pm-5am; \$20

### THE FIFTH ANNUAL MIAMI MEETS DETROIT BBQ

Presented by Sparks & XLR8R

Alton Miller	Derrick May
DJ Craze	Ectomorph
Eyevee	Keith Worth
Matthew Dear	Mike Clark
Norm Talley	Nova
Painted Pictures (Malik Alston)	
Punisher	Scan 7
Stacey Pullen	Stryke

Opium Garden, 136 Collins Ave, Miami Beach; 1pm-10pm; \$8

### M3 SUMMIT SUNSET SESSIONS I

Presented by Motorola, in association with Honeygun Labs, She-Bass and Ghostly International

Louie Vega presents Elements of Life featuring Blaze, Anané and Raul Midon  
Scott Hardkiss w/ special guest Lisa Shaw  
Aceyalone & Abstract Rude  
Midwest Product (live)  
VJs Honeygun Labs

Surfcomber Hotel poolside, 1717 Collins Ave, Miami Beach; 5pm-10pm; M3 Summit Pass exclusive event

## SUNDAY, MARCH 7

### BREAKS DAY

Presented by T.C.R. & Functional Breaks

Adam Freeland	Atomic Hooligan
Barry Ashworth	Ben & Lex
B-Side	Chris Carter
DJ Hyper	J.D.S.
DJ Icey	Elite Force
Freq Nasty	Jean Jacques Smoothie
Lee Coombs	Moguai
Phil K	Rennie Pilgrim
Simply Jeff	Skool of Thought
Soul of Man	Stanton Warriors
Tamsin	Uberzone

Maze, 1290 18th St, Miami Beach; 10pm-5am; \$25

### FUTURE 04 PRESENTS BBE'S 10th ANNIVERSARY AT WMC 2004

Presented by Triple 5 Soul, BBEMusic, Okayplayer  
Produced by Little Giant

BBE Crew	DJ ?uestlove of the Roots
DJ Jazzy Jeff	DJ Static
J Live	Madlib
Peanut Butter Wolf	Rich Medina
Vikter Dubplaix	

Opium Garden, 136 Collins Ave, Miami Beach; 11am-5pm; \$20

### KEEP HOPE ALIVE

A Lifebeat Benefit Compilation; Presented by King Street Sounds & ClubPlanet.com, in association with XLR8R and I:DJ

DJ Spinna	DJ Turbo & DJ Gee
Kevin Hedge	Ron Trent
Joi Cardwell (Live PA)	Stephanie Cook (Live PA)

Rumi, 330 Lincoln Rd, Miami Beach; 10pm-5am; \$10 before midnight, \$15 after

### SWAMP THING

Presented by XLR8R & PK Graphics

Airborn Audio	Aura
Dabrye	Ectomorph
Finesse and Runway	Hearts of Darkneses
Jimmy Edgar	Karakter
Matthew Dear	Otto von Schirach
Richard Devine	Salim Rafiq
Secret Frequency Crew	Soft Pink Truth
Styrofoam	

I/O Lounge, 30 NE 14th Street, Miami; 9pm-'til it ends; \$15

## MONDAY, MARCH 8

### POTENTIAL DROP

Presented by M-Audio

214	Andrea Parker
Ben Milstein	DBJ
Dean Decosta	Deru
Eight Frozen Modules	Funkstörung
Hydraulic	Karakter
Kosmik Neil	Kris Krause
L'usine	Polaris
RD	Red nktar
Salim Rafiq	Sariah Storm
Trichome	Mind Trap (Live Visuals)

Jarret Smith (Mordka, Derivative; Live Visuals)

Soho Lounge, 175 N.E 36th Street, Miami Design District; 9pm-'til whenever; \$20 before 11:30, \$25 after



## PREFIX

AUDIOFILE:  
BLACK  
STROBE

### THE MASTERS OF BLINDING DEATH DISCO KEEP IT SEVERE AND SEXY AT THE SAME TIME.

In the resumés of electronic musicians, remix credits are the ultimate currency of cool. By this logic, French electro-rockers Black Strobe (Ivan Smagghe and Arnaud Rebotini) must have more cred than they know what to do with. With only a handful of proper singles to their name, they've nevertheless been tapped to remix everyone from Norse indie loungers Röyksopp to house stars Tiefschwarz, as well as dark dance royalty Tones on Tail and Playgroup. Pop culture mavens to a "t"—this is the group who titled their third single "Me and Madonna"—they've even tackled an authorized edit of Eminem's "Without Me," as well as appearing on comps from Tiga's *DJ Kicks* to Tigersushi's *Kill the DJ*. Suffice to say, Black Strobe is one of the only names that resonates with electroclashers, death disco aficionados and the glam-techno elite alike.

Their name sounds as dangerous as it does sexy, like a breakout at a disco prison. Perhaps that description isn't too far off. The French duo specializes in a unique brand of electro-techno-pop that uses retro elements—springy arpeggios, grinding analog synths—as a battering ram to smash through to a lawless futurism. It's no surprise that the pair, who have known each other for "ten or 15 years" in Smagghe's estimation, used to work together at the Rough Trade record store in Paris. It was there that they breathed in the intermingled airs of punk, death rock, EBM and acid house that would give birth to their own intoxicating cocktail.

"Even though we've always listened to dance music, basically we're both rock kids," admits the 32-year-old Smagghe. "I hated dance music when I was a kid. Not all of it, but apart from New Order, for me it was just evil. Dance clubs were just places where rednecks would go to pick up girls; there was no proper musical club culture. Well, there was, but it was really underground—I was too young for disco, but too old for the first acid house scene, which I thought was just evil."

Smagghe and Rebotini eventually discovered electronic dance music, and by 1997 they released "Paris Acid City" on Source Records, the label that introduced the "French wave" of electronic music, including Motorbass and Air. "For years there was no such thing as a 'French thing,'" protests Smagghe, which makes "Paris Acid City"—a dirty tune that prefigured the current acid revival by a good seven years—such a joyful anomaly. "Now, though, you've got rock bands making electro, you've got the minimal thing and proper deep house—[the scene] is quite healthy."

As for Black Strobe, they're keen to keep ruling the electro-rock sandbox. While their next single will appear on Output, they're reportedly shopping around for a label to release their autumn 2004 full-length. In the meantime, Smagghe's recently invested his own cache of cool in *Death Disco* (Eskimo), an impossibly au-courant mix of EBM, funk punk and Cologne techno. "I wanted to do my own version of an Eskimo compilation," explains Smagghe. "I wanted it to be what I am—to feature things that are shady, in-between, a bit dark."

"At the moment, what I am [and] what I've always been into is kind of fashionable," Smagghe admits, laughing. "I know it will pass, but I'll still be here." And so, one assumes, will Black Strobe, strafing across the wasteland of abandoned trends, lighting the way forward—or, at the very least, to the next watchtower of cool. ]

Ivan Smagghe presents *Death Disco* (Eskimo) and Black Strobe's remix of The Rapture's "Sister Saviour" (Output) are out now. Black Strobe's artist album will be out in September. [www.outputrecordings.com](http://www.outputrecordings.com)

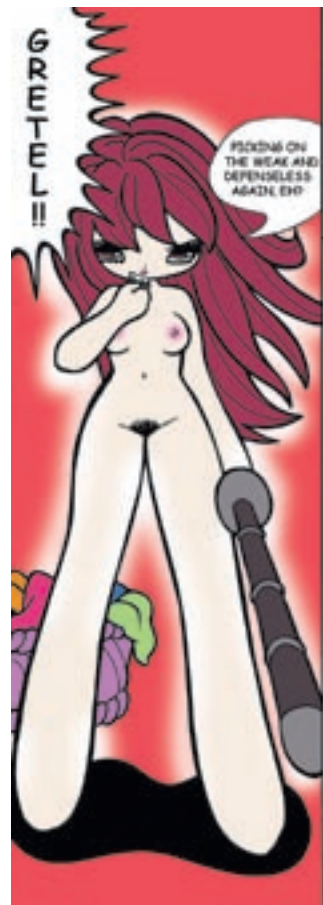


Japanese graphic novelist **Junko Mizuno** might make uptight suits like Michael Powell and Pat Buchanan scratch their furrowed brows, but envelope-pushers like Camille Paglia and Annie Sprinkle will probably grok her revisionist fairy tales full of nubile heroines and the male suckers they destroy. Mizuno, a female kicking ass in a male-dominated manga world, has her eye on global culture's fascination with sexualized innocents. And, like any good storyteller, she wants to screw the paradigm.

Mizuno's version of *Hansel and Gretel* (softcover; Viz Communications, \$15.95) is a Lynchian fever dream featuring pigs that slice and sell meat off of their own stomachs, girls that grow spinach out of their heads, and a Hansel with a tuna can strapped over his mouth (in Mizuno's capable hands, males get roughed up on the regular). It gets weirder, especially with *Princess Mermaid* (softcover, Viz Communications, \$15.95), Mizuno's conflation of Andersen's tale of a fishy girl gone wild and Homer's story of the Sirens. Three flesh-eating hotties seduce sailors into their underwater palace, until one falls in love and then they gotta get all philosophical on their food's ass. If you toss Mizuno's darkly psychedelic composition into the mix, you have a pair of outrageous kids' books that are strictly for adults. *Scott Thill*

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AUDIOFILE:  
HiM



Top (from left): Doug Scharin, Rob King, Christian Dautresme  
Bottom: Adam Pierce, Josh Berman, Josh LaRue, Griffin Rodriguez

**DRUMMER DOUG SCHARIN'S GENRE-MELTING SEVEN-PIECE THAWS HEARTS...AND VANS.**

It's been a cold, cold world lately for Chicago's Doug Scharin. As the drummer for two big, mega-eclectic, post-everything bands—Adam Pierce's Mice Parade and his brainchild, HiM—Scharin spent February traveling the blizzard-rocked Eastern Seaboard, the Gulf states, and the Midwest on the aptly-named Frostbite Tour. But not before a pre-tour travail. "Our van got broken into," Scharin reports with a chuckle. "We didn't have anything in the van to swipe, but it was during the snow storm. So we went out there at midnight, and found ten inches of snow in the back of the van, and we had to drive it home."

Even semi-arctic climates can't stop the hot-blooded mission of HiM, the new century's only truly elegant, genre-melting troupe. Over eight years and six albums, Scharin—who has drummed with brood-rock mavens Codeine and Rex, and experimental

hard-indie rockers June of '44—has taken HiM from dubby solo studio experiments to a rotating seven-piece ensemble, playing improvisations that draw on its members' experiences with post-punk, jazz and Afro-beat. Past all-star HiM alumni include Tortoise players Bundy K. Brown and Jeff Parker and June of '44ers Fred Erskine and Sean Meadows.

Initially inspired by working in Brooklyn with epic-dubmeisters Bill Laswell and Skiz Fernando, Scharin's recent work has tended to de-emphasize studio trickery in favor of composition and African accents. "The songs and melodies have become more important than the technique," he notes, "although dub is still there as an atmosphere. And I've been totally relating to the percussive melodies and polyrhythms of West African music. The more I've studied it, the more it's opened up connections to all kinds of music for me."

The group's last album, July 2003's *Many In High Places Are Not Well*, found Scharin & Co. at their most inspired, deftly

juggling complex rhythms, guitar-feedback ambience, Senegalese kora harp, and calmly chanted vocals by The Letter E's Christian Dautresme and Múm's Kristin Anna Valtysdottir. Scharin says that HiM's upcoming album (to be released later this year) will continue *Many's* creative stride, with some different touches. "There's a funkier Afro-pop aspect to one of the tunes, and [Pierce] and I have this chill double-mbira piece, which I'm psyched about. But basically, I love the way this band's current line-up is, and I'm psyched to make a record that I don't have to heavily edit in the studio. This new one will represent the way we sound live."

HiM's obviously taught Scharin plenty, besides how to survive off-season touring schedules. "It's definitely made me a better musician, and taught me how to listen and communicate better with some great musicians, like [guitarist] Josh LaRue and [bassist] Griffin Rodriguez. Basically, everyone in this band just rocks."

*Many In High Places Are Not Well* is available on Bubblecore. [www.bubblecore.com](http://www.bubblecore.com)

"Besides being a lyrical super hero MC, he has something incredibly valid to say."

**Slug (Atmosphere)**

"How should I word this, 2MEX is definitely medicine for the Music."

**Aceyalone**



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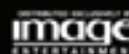
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FEB. 24.04

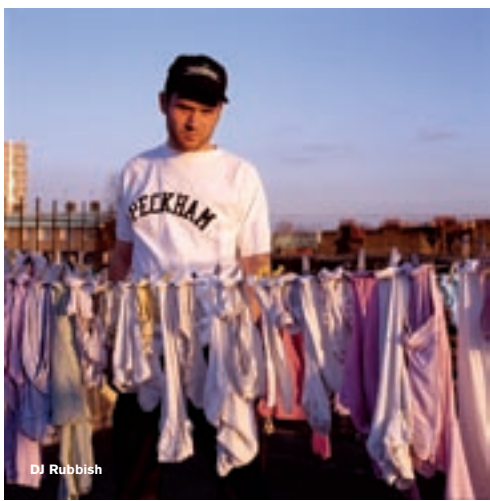


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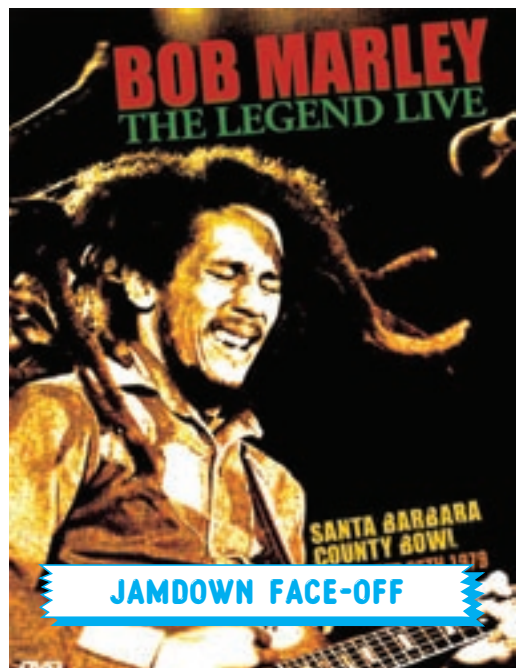


Paul Richardson

## THE NEXT BIG THING

Neither a DJ nor rubbish, Shaun Pubis is an anomaly. Under the **DJ Rubbish** alias, he delivers Chomsky-steeped rhymes in a thick East London accent, backed by jiggy hip-hop instrumentals, skewed electro beats, and bursts of 2-step. With tracks titled "George Bush Is An Islamic Fundamentalist Obviously" and "Tony Blair Is A Bad Man," it's clear where Rubbish's politics lie, but thankfully his musings prove both entertaining and illuminating. Add to this audio manipulated backup from **Cassetteboy**—who specializes in intricate cut and paste deconstructions of political double speak and pop culture absurdities—and you have both a live spectacle and a full-on multimedia assault. With their live performances featuring rubber-masked effigies of Bush, Blair, Saddam and even Michael Jackson, a DJ in a ski mask and free-styles based on headlines from London's trashy tabloid newspapers, DJ Rubbish and Cassetteboy's fusion of hip-hop club culture and satire is nothing less than brilliant.

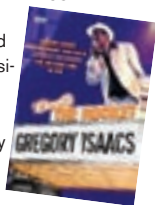
*Brion Paul*  
Inside A Whale's Cock Volume 1 is out now on Barry's Bootlegs.



**Bob Marley: The Legend Live** (Sanctuary; \$24.98) is the one Marley live DVD you must own. Like the musical equivalent of MLK's "I've Been To The Mountaintop" speech, Marley sings at the Santa Barbara Bowl two years before his death with a prescient conviction that's emotionally electric. The Wailers band, including the tremendous female vocal trio the I-Threes, gives virtuoso accompaniment. Dub versions, bonus songs and interview segments make this a gold medal winner.

On the other hand, **Gregory Isaacs: Live At The Rocket** (Jet Star; \$19.95) is hardly as inspiring. The buttery lover's-rock crooner was at the height of his powers on the 1984 album *Live At Academy Brixton* (Rough Trade) with reggae's tightest musicians, The Roots Radics, backing him. Forward 20 years later and a coke-damaged Isaacs sounds depleted, backed by amateur musicians who weakly lend support like porters at a home for the aged. Not even a candid pre-show interview can save this lackluster performance by a faded star. *Tomas*

[www.sanctuaryrecordsgroup.com](http://www.sanctuaryrecordsgroup.com), [www.jetstar.co.uk](http://www.jetstar.co.uk)



**SPIN CYCLE** Original rocker **Little Richard** will be the keynote speaker at Austin music conference South By Southwest • **Gus Gus** re-releases their single "David" this month with remixes by Tim Deluxe. Copies will be limited to 1,000 on sky blue vinyl • Chicago's got it going on: the 20,000 square-foot **Sound Bar** club opens this month • UK independent One Little Indian, which has released music from **Björk**, **Sneaker Pimps**, and **The Shamen**, launch a US branch this month and a new album from **Fluke** on May 11 • Montreal's **MUTEK** festival will be held June 2-6 • French kisses: Moody space lounge gods **Air** will tour North America April 2-May 3 • Comic books' first Indian female heroine debuts in Antony Mazotta's **Bombaby** series (SLG Publishing) • Rapper **Mos Def** will play lead character Ford Prefect in the movie version of Douglas Adams's *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* • **DFA's** expecting: new albums are due out in summer by **The Juan Maclean** and **Delia Gonzalez & Gavin Russom** • Carpark's reissue label, **Acute**, dusts off **Glenn Branca's** first solo release, *Lesson No. 1*, this month • Anticon founder **Sole** has a new side project called *Mansbestfriend*

on Morr Music • **Compost** gears up for spring with new albums from **Joseph Malik** and **Intuit**, plus *I Like It Vol. 2* and the *Partykeller* compilation, a selection of nu-funk tracks mixed by Munich's **Florian Keller** • Famed UK graf writer **Mode 2** presents an exhibit "of the females that inspired him on a recent trip to Tokyo" at San Francisco's **Future Primitive Sound** Headquarters; the show runs through April 25 • The UK installment of the **All Tomorrow's Parties** festival happens March 26-28 and April 2-4 with **Mogwai**, **Tortoise**, **Shellac**, **LCD Soundsystem**, **The Notwist** and more • **Hank Shocklee**, half of **Public Enemy's** production team **Bomb Squad**, kicks off a new monthly "xpiritual" jam session every second Wednesday at New York's **Bowery Poetry Club** • **INGrooves** is a digital music distribution company, providing indie artists access to iTunes, Rhapsody and Napster; see [www.ingrooves.com](http://www.ingrooves.com) • Never be without party trivia again: visit [www.catalog-of-cool.com](http://www.catalog-of-cool.com) • Check out San Diego's latest art gallery, **District Three**, at [www.d3art.org](http://www.d3art.org) • Found sounds: Check out the "orphanage" for thrift-store-bought albums and cover art at [www.showandtellmusic.com/pages](http://www.showandtellmusic.com/pages).



from left: Mode 2, Gus Gus, Mos Def, Glenn Branca, The Notwist, Little Richard, Björk, Shellac



**Savath & Savalas, Apropa't**  
An album of organic Spanish folk, a Scott Herren collaborative project with Catalan singer-songwriter Eva Puyuelo Muns. Released January 2004, on tour in April.



**Prefuse 73, Extinguished**  
A must have collection of alternate takes and beats from *One Word Extinguisher*. Released August, 2003.



**Prefuse 73, One Word Extinguisher**  
The beats that got everyone's attention. "He rolls over his competitors like white capped surf-strides atop the coast." - XLR8R Released May 2003.



**Prefuse 73, Vocal Studies & Uprock Narratives**  
The debut album, at a new low price. Released June, 2001.

[warprecords.com](http://www.warprecords.com)



**Danger Mouse & Jemini, Ghetto Pop Life**  
This is the genuine article. A modern hip hop masterpiece: a fabled mc - Jemini The Gifted One plus a talented new super-producer - DJ Danger Mouse (of Grey Album fame), with help from a clutch of the greatest innovators in hip-hop history - Organized Konfusion's Prince Poetry, The Alkaholiks, The Pharcyde and New York's J-Zone.



**Non-Prophets, Hope**  
The Non-Prophets are producer Joe Beats and mc Sage Francis. "Hope" is the long awaited debut album from Sage and Joe.



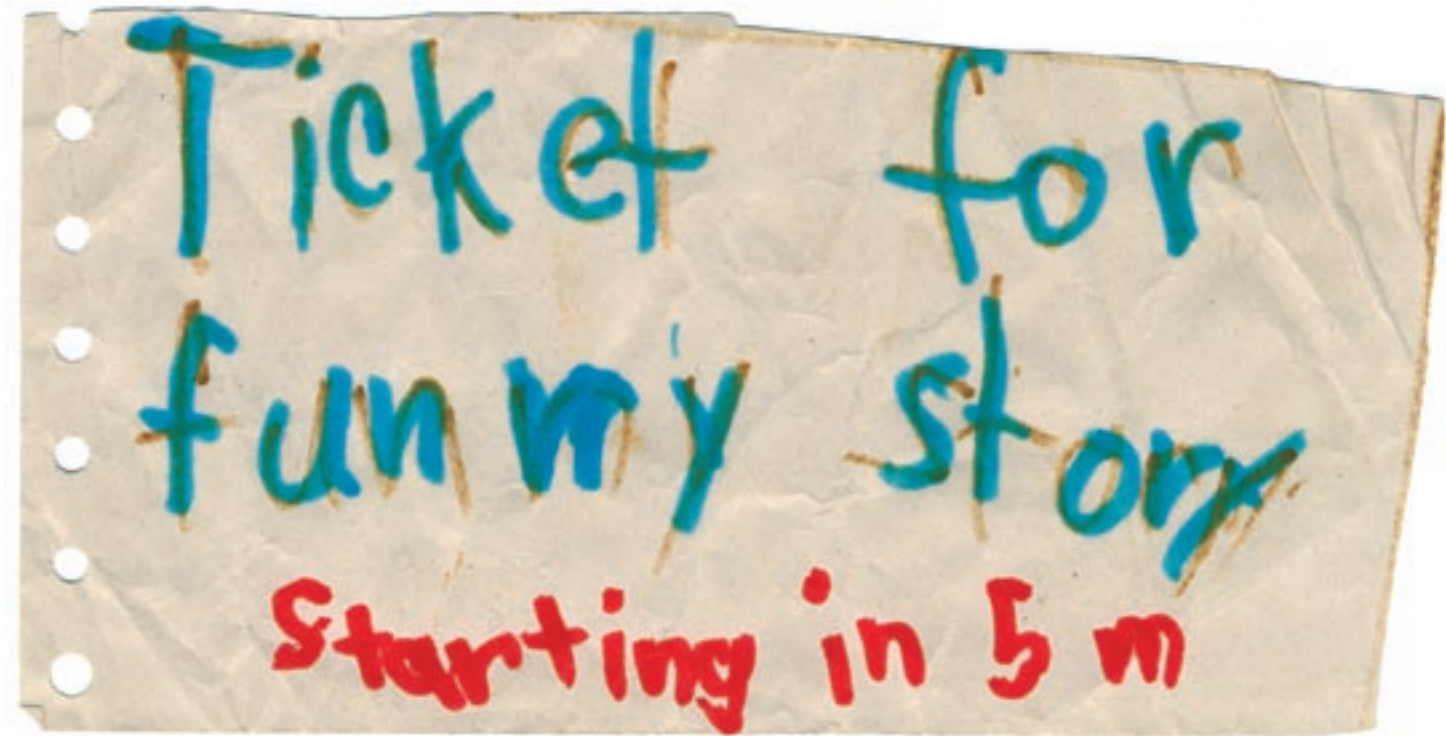
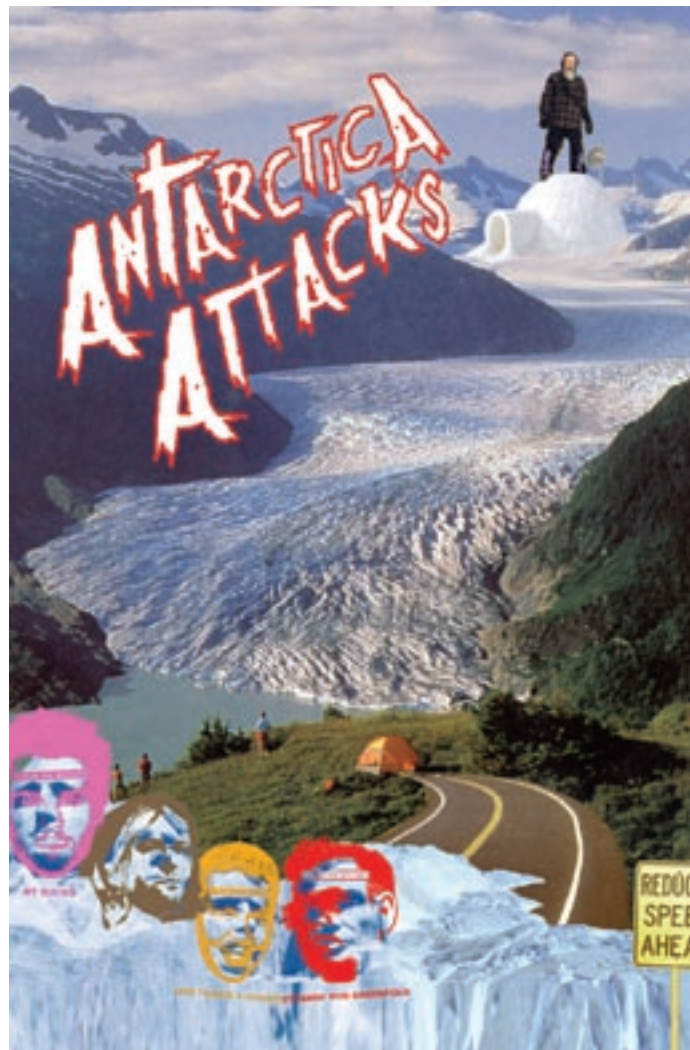
**DJ Signify, Sleep No More**  
Signify's ambitious debut album, is a dark cinematic concept record which has coupled Bary-Adamson-like quirk with a Shadow-esque deliberate thump. It's a collaboration with Sage Francis and Buck65 whose stories add a creeping David Lynch-horror to the LP.



**Boom Bip, Corymb**  
A CD of new material, Peel Sessions, and remixes by Boards of Canada, Mogwai, Fourtet and others.



[lexrecords.com](http://lexrecords.com)



**PREEMPTIVE STRIKE**

Trying to get a straight answer from the **DJs on Strike** organization is about as easy as delivering piranha babies. But maybe the amorphous duo of Johnny Kawasaki and DJ Suspence have said everything

they wanted to say already via wheatpaste posters, mix CDs and event flyers.

At this point, you're probably familiar with DoS's mash-up CD *Too Hot For Solid Steel* or their 2002 street blitz, featuring posters and stickers lambasting the world's so-called "top DJs" with slogans like "Steamin' Poo Oakenfold" and "BT Sucks." But just when you thought "John Digweed: Give Trance a Chance" was getting old, this duo—who hail from Seattle, WA by way of an igloo in Vostok, Antarctica—have got more firepower up the sleeves of their wizard robes.

DJs on Strike recently staged a Nirvana reunion show with a "new lead singer," advertised it all over downtown, and created a fake band set-up in an art gallery to surprise unwitting Seattle-ites who didn't get the joke. DJ Suspence says he's spent all his time lately "making functional, disposable cardboard guitars, basses and drum kits," no doubt preparing to shock attendees at Austin, TX's South by Southwest conference.

Though vague when pressed about what sort of antics we might expect next from DJs on Strike, Suspence was honest when asked how Washingtonians respond to the collective's insurgent behavior. "They mosh," he states. "Moshing is actually the oldest documented renegade artform." *Tyra Bangs*

[www.djsonstrike.com](http://www.djsonstrike.com)



If *Found Magazine's* masthead were all-inclusive, it would consume over half the book. Davy Rothbart, the Ann Arbor-based zine's founding editor, receives up to 10 contributions daily. That's because the entire zine consists of discarded pieces of paper: love notes, demented shopping lists, baffling photos and other textual debris. Rothbart jokes that his army of "finders" are "people who are more curious about others, or just less afraid of trash." Whatever the contributors' compulsions, reading *Found* is as satisfying as rummaging through a stranger's diary, but without the guilt. "A certain degree of voyeurism is healthy," Rothbart says. "It's natural to be curious about how other people experience being human."

In April, Rothbart embarks on the *Slapdance Across America Tour 2004!* (don't forget the exclamation point!), which hits all 50 states in just nine months. On the road, he reads *Found's* greatest finds, breathing hilarity into the anonymous grudges, self-doubts and heartbreaks that the zine indexes. His performance cross-pollinates *This American Life* host Ira Glass's glib commentary with David Sedaris's neurotic wit. Ultimately, he shows how most of us are plagued by the same irrational obsessions and, especially, bad grammar. So what's a slapdance, you ask? Rothbart will reveal all when he reads the "find" that originated the term. Here's a hint: it's something dirty. *Michael Haggerty*

For complete tour listings, visit [www.foundmagazine.com](http://www.foundmagazine.com).

**HEADS OR TALES**

Sex, skiing, Hitler and middle-aged fathers abused by their adolescent sons make for

a furnace of literary heat spanning the 156 burnt and curling pages of *Headless* (softcover; Akashic, \$12.95). Short story satyr Benjamin Weissman, author of 1995's lurid, drugged-up *Dear Dead Person*, fires off his latest prose salvo for Dennis Cooper's Little House On The Bowery imprint, receiving raves from indie publishing deities Bret Easton Ellis, Alice Sebold and Lydia Davis in the process. The 22 sardonic tales—in chapters like "Technically Dadless" and "Tips From The Sensual Man"—offer up gang fights gone terribly wrong, twin sisters talking about their sex lives and child murderers who hang around public toilets. (Speaking of bogs and what goes in them, if you can't stomach a little "scat talk," don't buy this book.) Weissman's meticulous and compact tracts unveil the neurotic thoughts of characters as outrageous as they are mundane in moments that switch from guffaw-out-loud funny to eewwww gross in a flash. *Headless* is a book so brilliant that I'll end up buying it for five friends, and so ferocious that I'll have to put it on a shelf far away and forget about it for a while. *Tomas*

[www.akashicbooks.com](http://www.akashicbooks.com)

**LASER-GUIDED**

Ah, laser beams...not just for Pink Floyd light shows and eye surgery any more. **Nike** has figured out how to use them to precision-cut kicks, and now every sneaker fiend from Tokyo to Tel Aviv wants a pair. Recently, the shoe giant teamed up with New York design team **Staple**, who reworked five classic pairs for release this spring. The Japanese tattoo-inspired Rift Plus (right) and Cortez (left) reworks debut in April, and while tough guys may find the chocolate brown Cortez too bourgie in comparison to the cholo-beloved original, the fish scale-embazoned white Rift comes off just right. Come June,

Staple will release their organic takes on the Shox NZ, the Air Burst and the Air Max 90, done up in white, blue and brown color schemes and nature themes that reflect land, air and sea. *Tyra Bangs*

[www.stapleddesign.com](http://www.stapleddesign.com)







**MUNICH'S FOUR-PIECE TAKES ONE PART ELECTROPOP AND TWO PARTS POLITICAL FIREPOWER AND MIXES WELL.**

The title of Lali Puna's third album, *Faking the Books*, is thematically unrelated to the world-shaking accounting disasters of the last few years. But where it lacks advice on how to manufacture the next financial crisis, it scores heavily with synth-laden melodies, lyrical urgency and aggro guitar attacks. This follow-up to the German quartet's highly praised second album, 2001's *Scary World Theory*, strikes a balder and bolder political posture, full of strum-und-drone guitars and distortion-wracked shoe-gazer aesthetics. Still, the band remains true to form with jittery rhythms, layers of chiming electronics and witty takes on the click, crackle and buzz of day-to-day digital sounds.

While it's Lali Puna's exceptional brand of electropop wizardry that has led to collaborations with UK dance stalwarts Bomb the Bass and Two Lone Swordsmen, it's

grounded polemics that seem to drive Lali Puna's founder and main songwriter, Munich radio producer Valerie Trebeljahr. You could say the band—which also includes Trebeljahr's boyfriend, guitarist and Notwist member Markus Acher, drummer Christoph Brandner and keyboardist Christian Hess—has a beat and a brain to boot.

Just as *Scary World Theory* eerily pre-figured the events of 9/11, the group's third record scopes out a dangerous new world order and switches up its musical approach in response. Songs such as "Call 1-800-Fearm," "Grin and Bear" and the title track explicitly tackle Trebeljahr's fears. "There was so much going on with the war and Bush and the role America has in this world now, and so the album reflects on that," she says. "Faking the Books' for me is a very cynical song because it's about politicians faking the books, faking history books, and, like what Bush did for example, faking the vote."

Even the creation of Lali Puna—which got its name from Trebeljahr's nickname,

Lali, and her birthplace (Pusan, South Korea)—was reactionary, a response to Trebeljahr's previous experience in LB Page, a six-piece all-girl indie rock band. "When you work with girls it's a very important factor in the band that you are friends," she says. "It's more professional like it is now."

Surprisingly, boundary issues, hurt feelings and bickering haven't ensued with Trebeljahr's boyfriend Acher, who almost immediately begged to join Lali Puna. "I didn't want him to join because everybody would say, 'Oh, he's doing the music and she's just singing on top!'" she says. But toiling alone in front of her laptop became too isolating for Trebeljahr. "After a time I just noticed that it's making it better if he joins the band and if we work together. He wrote songs and I wrote songs, and we combined them and it really works good together." *Voila*. No faking required. ]

*Faking the Books* is out now on Morr Music.  
www.morrmusic.com



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Jiulin Luth

**SAO NECESSARY**

XLR8R staffer Vivian Host takes a break from her rigorous fake tanning schedule to bring you the best of this season's Brazil-inspired items.

**NACO FUTBOL BAG (NaCo; \$40)**

Even if you can't dribble like Ronaldo, you can still take one for the team with this sturdy vinyl sack from NaCo. It's perfect should you need to carry exactly one soccer ball—or records, an iPod and a \$20 sack. Also comes in *sportif* colorways, including green/white, grey/navy and black/white. [www.fabric8.com](http://www.fabric8.com)

**PELE AERO DYNAMICS SHIRT (Ropeadope; \$24)**

Ropeadope's bright yellow soft cotton tee—emblazoned with a laughing Pele—is a much better way of showing your Brazilian pride than a sequined thong. No, really. [www.fabric8.com](http://www.fabric8.com)

**PAVIL BOOK BY OS GEMEOS (Luggage Store Gallery; \$26)**

São Paulo's graffiti-writing twins Os Gemeos deliver folk art, photographs of Brazil and plenty of the long, skinny, *metalleros*-style tagging Sao is known for in *Pavil*, a catalog from their show at San Francisco's Luggage Store Gallery. [www.luggagestoregallery.org](http://www.luggagestoregallery.org), [www.giantrobot.com](http://www.giantrobot.com)

**BRASIL INSPIRED (Die Gestalten Verlag; \$35)**

*Brasil Inspired* is the coffeetable book for those who only drink caipirinhas and don't even own a coffeetable. Graphic designers from Brazil and beyond—including names like MK12, Büro Destruct, Praystation and Jeremy Hollister—deliver 144 pages of synapse-shattering visual stimulation inspired by the South American nation. [www.die-gestalten.de](http://www.die-gestalten.de), [www.giantrobot.com](http://www.giantrobot.com)

**BRAZILIA AND DISCOS É CULTURA T-SHIRTS (Ubiquity; \$19.99)**

That Tupac t-shirt just won't fly when you're in Groove Merchant searching through the vintage Jobim. Celebrate your good taste in records and help support the "men wearing bright colors" movement with these two fly t-shirts from those cats at Ubiquity. [www.ubiquityrecords.com](http://www.ubiquityrecords.com)

**PESO "BRASIL MODEL" FLIP-FLOPS (DVS Shoes; \$12)**

Molded PVC has never looked more innocent than on these green, yellow and blue sandals. They look low-key while you're wearing them, but flip 'em off and watch everyone gape at your Portuguese pride as the insignia from the Brazilian flag busts off the soles. [www.dvsshoes.com](http://www.dvsshoes.com)

**Carpark Records is fond of referring to Josh Presseisen** (who records as Marumari) as their "young space traveler," and they're not half wrong. His album covers echo both the pastel grandeur of Yes and '70s sci-fi paintings, and the music within is similarly extra-terrestrial, meshing pop influences with lush and glitchy electronic layers. His work can be compared to that of friends like Lusine, Casino vs. Japan and Stars as Eyes, but from the wilds of upstate New York, Marumari definitely delivers his own pastiche. For a sample, check 2001's *Supermogadon*, an album that meshed smooth jazz and '80s alt-rock with the sounds of the future. We recently dragged Josh out from the cocoon to talk about his current alien obsession. *Tyra Bangs*

**OBSESSIONS: MARUMARI**

**MARUMARI ON UFOS:**

Obsessions have been part of my life since I was very young. My current obsession is UFOs and ETs. As a kid I loved *ET*, and to this day it is my favorite movie. However, not until a few months ago did I realize the reality of the situation. My wife Sasha and I were watching a show hosted by Bryant Gumbel on the Sci-Fi channel—a documentary about a UFO that crashed in Pennsylvania. Half of the town had witnessed the crash and said the object had a controlled landing (unlike a meteor) and that the shape of it was unlike that of a plane. This led me to look up more info on the subject, and also read several books about it. It seems that there were several crashes, including the one at Roswell, about which the US government changes its "official" story every few years. More recently, family members and friends have described to me their own personal UFO sightings. Also, I saw a video from an organization trying to get the government to come clean about the subject; apparently, the government has access to the energy that powers the spacecrafts. I was a skeptic before, but after reading books on the subject and hearing the testimony of thousands of witnesses I feel that we have had a blanket over our heads for the past 50 or so years.

[www.carparkrecords.com](http://www.carparkrecords.com)



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# BOB MOOG



## AMERICA'S ROGUE SYNTHESIZER GURU TALKS ABOUT THE BIRTH OF HIS GLORIOUS MACHINE.

In the 1960s, Robert A. Moog emerged as an archetypal American male: a hobbyist. But unlike his hot rod-obsessed contemporaries, the New Yorker applied his mechanical expertise to musical ends, inventing the most important new instrument in the age of electricity: the Moog synthesizer. The Moog—the world's first portable synth—ushered electronic sounds out of the university classroom and into the mainstream, premiering on Wendy Carlos's groundbreaking 1968 album *Switched-On Bach*, a record of electronic covers of classical music standards. Since that time, the Moog has regularly been embraced by psych pop, future lounge and dance acts from Donna Summer to Air to Stereolab to Numbers. There's no question that 70-year-old Mr. Moog (whose name rhymes with *rogue*) has cast a long shadow over the last 40 years of popular music, an influence that will no doubt extend well into the 21st century.

**XLR8R:** *Nowadays, so many musical instruments are only available for six months or a year, whereas the original MiniMoog was in production for over ten years. To what do you attribute the longevity of the MiniMoog?*

**Bob Moog:** There are two approaches to designing anything that people use. One is to open the window, look out and see what's

hot, what's in fashion, put it all in a box and sell it. I'd say that 95 percent of consumer electronics are like that—musical instruments, cell phones, CD players. The other way is to close the window and to think about what would make a good tool, regardless of what's in fashion today. This is how I like to work.

**XLR8R:** *The longevity of the MiniMoog was crucial because it allowed artists the ability to grow with the instrument and master it.*

**BM:** Exactly. These products that are here today and gone tomorrow don't allow for that. When you just cop hot features, I call that a shallow instrument. And when those become popular, you get a downward spiral going, because when you use shallow instruments, you get bored of them really quickly, and soon you find you won't have spent enough time with any one instrument. As a designer, the biggest problem is that the stuff that's most popular with working musicians tends to be stuff that they're already familiar with.

**XLR8R:** *One of the greatest opportunities for growth with the synthesizer is in the interface. Why hasn't there been a more rapid development in that area?*

**BM:** The interfaces are always the most challenging part of any instrument. You can very easily take a keyboard and put it on a set of sounds that are brand new, and a musician can immediately begin to make music with it. Whereas if you take old sounds and put them on a completely new control device, a

musician will have to practice and develop a technique before he can get music out of it. That takes a long time.

**XLR8R:** *At the time that you were working on your first synthesizer in New York, Don Buchla was working on similar technology in California. Why do you think that the Moog became the instrument of choice for musicians?*

**BM:** I think it's the nature of the user interface. I had a keyboard as a major component of the interface and the organization of the oscillators was more appropriate to melodic music, as opposed to the more textural music that Don's [Buchla Box] was suited for. Don is very good at what he does, and he has a feeling for what works from having been a musician himself. The only thing that he's not good at—and for that matter, neither am I—is running a big business, with marketing and production and all those issues.

**XLR8R:** *You've accomplished so much and been so influential in this field. What keeps you going?*

**BM:** It's my calling. This is where I fit in. There's something I refer to as the cosmic network, from which creativity is derived, and I have the ability to tap into that information to do what I do. As a result, designing musical instruments is an integral part of who I am, for better or worse. ]

[www.moogmusic.com](http://www.moogmusic.com)



**MOOGVIE** Directed by Hans Fjellestad (best known for 2003's *Frontier Life*), *Moog* tells the story of one of America's last great inventors, a self-made man upholding the nation's storied entrepreneurial tradition. Shot on location in New York, London, Tokyo and Moog's own ranch in Asheville, NC, the documentary (produced by California's ZU 33 Films) hits screens across the country this summer, with a DVD release planned for late 2004. Rounded out by archival photographs and home-video snippets, *Moog* also documents the inventor's interactions with electronic musicians like Luke Vibert and Money Mark, both of whom will appear on the soundtrack alongside the Neptunes, Tortoise and Stereolab. *Martin Turenne*

[www.moogmovie.com](http://www.moogmovie.com)

Pictured clockwise from top left: Moog and Fjellestad in Asheville, NC (Ryan Page), Moog and Fjellestad in Tokyo (Nana Torii), Hollywood studio visit with Bob, Money Mark and crew (Ryan Page)

## Breaking News

by Jonny Park

In an era of mass distortion and clamored confusion, society has unwillingly suffered from the hands of evil. The world is engulfed in a web of misguided rage and madness, as the overarching effects are painfully clear. While suffocating depictions of hell bent commercialism exploit and embrace these dramatized notions, music has become an alternate means of escape. At the forefront of this audible uplifting movement stands one of the most distinct and powerful voices in hip-hop today: LMNO.

Ascending out of Long Beach, CA, LMNO (Leave My Name Out) has captured the attention of the inclusive music audience and industry through his works as a solo artist and as a member of the super-squadron Visionaries, earning a reputation and garnishing respect as a spiritual soldier, while paving the road for all memorandum musicians.

With an extraordinary scope of soulful sensibility, LMNO possesses the intangible ability of funneling faith and inspiration into bold conceptions of hip-hop assignation. His music provides a healthy dose of faith and conviction, potently piercing and infecting minds from all walks of life.

article continued on 4.04



photo taken by B+

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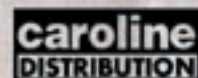


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## THIS TWIN CITIES DUO PULLS NO PUNCHES.

Many are the battle champs who've failed miserably in the studio, incapable of translating their freestyle skills into a fruitful recording career. Such is not the case with Minnesota's Mike Averill (Eyedea) and Max Keltgen (Abilities), a pair of highly decorated pugilists who would gladly trade in their titles for eternal life on wax.

Friends since their early teenage years, the St. Paul natives dominated the Midwest combat circuit in the late 1990s. While Averill is proud of his 1999 Scribble Jam MC title, he maintains that good battlers don't always make good musicians. "When all you're doing is battling, you don't really develop any songwriting skills," he explains. "A battle doesn't have staying power. It has the beauty of being a great live moment, but I'm not the sort of person who'd want to listen to it on tape later on."

Neither, it seems, would Keltgen, a former regional DMC turntable champion who's grown tired of the same old scratch clichés. "A DJ routine is like a magic trick," he says. "People might be amazed by it, but it gets boring in a real hurry. Now, what I want to do is make classic songs that I can perform forever."

Classic or not, the Midwest duo's sophomore effort, *E&A*, contains a couple of certifiable nuggets, including lead single "Now," which finds MC and DJ engaging in a wildly inventive game of call-and-response. As Averill delivers the track's hiccupping hook, Keltgen cuts a menacing guitar riff, making you wonder just who the star of the show really is. "What's cool about our dynamic is that we're both driven to be frontmen," says Averill. It's true: it's best to think of the duo as an indie-rap version of Page & Plant, two talented musicians fiercely competing for their share of the spotlight.

While *E&A* shows off Keltgen's acute musical sensibilities, it also finds Averill coming full circle to his battling roots, as he spits screeds far more aggressive than those delivered on the duo's existential debut, 2001's *First Born*. "When we made *First Born*," recalls Averill, "it was almost like we had skipped our teenage angst because we thought we were too smart for that shit. Now that we're in our early 20s, we're starting to realize that the world really *does* suck. Who knew?"

[www.rhymesayers.com](http://www.rhymesayers.com), [www.epitaph.com](http://www.epitaph.com)



AUDIOFILE:  
**EYEDEA & ABILITIES**

**AUSTIN BAND DELIVERS GUITAR EPIPHANIES TO BLOW UP YOUR HEADPHONES.**

In 1999, Austin, TX musicians Munaf Rayani, Mark T. Smith and Michael James saw a flyer advertising "a drummer seeking a sad, triumphant rock band." The fledging Explosions In the Sky knew they had found their missing piece.

The trio met up with would-be drummer Christopher Hrasky over pizza, and discovered a shared love of *Bottle Rocket*, Owen Wilson and Wes Anderson's darkly comic 1996 road caper. "Those three guys loved it and I loved it, and that became a topic of conversation," recalls Hrasky. "Yeah," concurs 23-year old Rayani. "The first meeting was so beautiful that I said, '[Even] if our [first practice] is horrible this guy still has to be our friend.' Luckily enough, it really meshed."

It was two years until the group

released their lauded debut, 2001's *Those Who Tell the Truth Shall Die, Those Who Tell the Truth Shall Live Forever* (Temporary Residence), and supported ...Trail Of Dead on a US tour that solidified Explosions' underground following. Their latest album, November 2003's *The Earth Is Not A Cold Dead Place*, is an appropriately stormy follow-up, full of gorgeous instrumental guitar drones and strummed symphonies that graft to your cranium like molten medal. The quartet's cohesion is reflected in songs like "Six Days At The Bottom of the Ocean," where guitars weave through each other like a dense tangle of vines, and the rhythm section provides a lattice that's constantly crumbling and being rebuilt.

The new album was written in the seclusion of an office building basement in Midland, Texas. "We opted a life of zero going on so we could have cheap rent and play music every day," explains Rayani. Playing from ten at night until

dawn, the band turned fictional narratives into resplendent instrumental music. On "The Only Moment We Were Alone," Explosions conveys the emotions of "a 13-year old boy and girl who are in love, and she's moving the next day," according to Hrasky. "He steals his parents' car and they just go driving for their last night. We just tried to play that."

It's hard to describe why Explosions in the Sky are the perfect headphone soundtrack to long nighttime bus rides, crowded airplanes and hectic work shifts—perhaps it's the way the band's sincere sense of creative purpose seeps through every note. "I think individually, we're nobodies," shares Rayani. "But as a unit, we get to produce these songs, and I think we really feed off each other—like we're all looking through the same lens."

[www.temporaryresidence.com](http://www.temporaryresidence.com)



From left: Chris Hrasky, Michael James, Mark Smith, Munaf Rayani



: \ run recordings

**Meat Beat Manifesto**

**5.1 DVD**

Including visuals by Ben Stokes. The DVD is the 5.1 Surround sound audio created by Jack Dangers including groundbreaking, perception-shattering audio for the hi-fi crowd and all music enthusiasts.

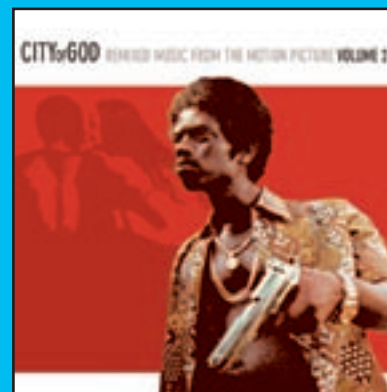
**In Dub**

...In Dub places the listener right at the beating heart of the action like never before, an audio format that does true justice to the sound clashing sorcery of Meat Beat Manifesto.



**CITY OF GOD REMIXED**

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"City of God" does not exploit or condescend, does not pump up its stories for contrived effect, does not contain silly and reassuring romantic sidebars, but simply looks, with a passionately knowing eye, at what it knows.

- Roger Ebert, The Chicago Sun Times



**Ken Ishi**

With 'Future In Light' Ken Ishii goes back to his techno roots, with a mind-blowing sonic journey of melodies, harmonies and funkiness wrapped up in his trademark solid, relentless beats.



**Freaky Chakra**

Daum Bentley's Freaky Chakra project combines funk, earthy techno and elements of classic industrial music.

This first taste of Freaky Chakra style is a wicked combo of shifting electronic timbres and varied rhythms.

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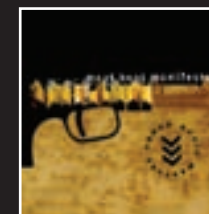
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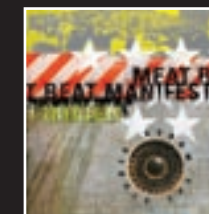
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**Meat Beat Manifesto Armed Audio Warfare**

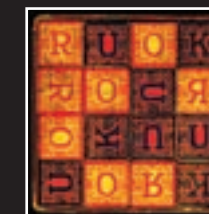
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**Meat Beat Manifesto Storm the Studio**

"A release so groundbreaking and forward-thinking that when it first came out, no one really had the vocabulary to describe it." - popmatters.com



**Meat Beat Manifesto RUOK?**

Jack Dangers continues to stretch sonic boundaries and influence new generations of sound activists in MBM's seventh album and first in 4 years, representing a healthy growth in the innovative Meat Beat sound.





**AUDIOFILE:  
TROUBLEMAN  
UNLIMITED**

Mike Simonetti

**PUNK PROVOCATEUR MIKE SIMONETTI STIRS UP TROUBLE, STRAIGHT FROM JERSEY CITY.**

It could be said that Troubleman Unlimited resides on the outskirts, literally and figuratively. Jersey born-and-bred label founder Mike Simonetti still resides in the Garden State, on the periphery of the New York City scene without being right up in its suffocating grasp. With a groundbreaking roster that includes Tracy and the Plastics, Black Dice, Measles Mumps Rubella, Tussle, Death Comet Crew and the Rogers Sisters, among others, the label thrives on the fringe, and Simonetti wouldn't have it any other way.

"I'm closer to New York than Williamsburg, but I have a New Jersey mailing address and think I'm lucky," reflects Simonetti. "I don't want to be a 'New York label' and have my bands being part of some signing trend before the major labels pull out from under them."

"My bands," he calls them protectively, most likely unconsciously. While part of him is easygoing—leaving rights to the master

tapes to his artists—Simonetti certainly comes across as a semi-possessive and opinionated obsessive when it comes to what he releases. "What's great about [Mike's] opinions," says Alexis Georgopoulos of San Francisco's dub-disco quartet Tussle, "is that there's a perfect mix of his fairly massive knowledge of music and his own idiosyncratic viewpoint—it's a deadpan dismissiveness that is really funny, even poignant."

"I respect an individual who loves his dog and his old school hip-hop records more than he loves his fellow man," says Miyuki Furtado of bristling bustlers the Rogers Sisters, now recording their second full-length for Troubleman.

With the new wave of No Wave and post-punk funk in fashion, listeners and A&R folks are finding themselves drawn like magnets to Troubleman's catalog of gritty glam and sandblasting squall. The label has unearthed countless bands—the Walkmen, Erase Errata, Har Mar Superstar (as alias Sean Na Na)—that have gone on to larger labels and heavy critical acclaim. Yet Simonetti keeps Troubleman close to its punk roots.

The label was born in 1992, following the demise of Simonetti's college zine *Wanna Communicate?* and inspired by a profound love of independent labels from Dischord to Rough Trade to Factory Records. Naming the label after a 1972 blaxploitation film, and patterning the original logo after a detail on the cover of Miles Davis's *On The Corner*, Troubleman took to heart the ethos of sampling and the importance of art-damaged punk. Early efforts included crucial 7-inches from hardcore bands like Unwound, Rorschach and Rye Coalition.

The label now has 127 releases out—not a bad run for a former BMX punk/metalhead turned straightedge club kid (in the notorious Michael Alig days) turned 32-year-old impresario of avant groove. "I like putting out new music that sounds fresh to me," says Simonetti, the outsider's insider. "When it's fresh, nobody can tell you how to feel about it. You have to experience it yourself, learn where the band's coming from and decide for yourself whether it's good or bad."

[www.troublemanunlimited.com](http://www.troublemanunlimited.com)

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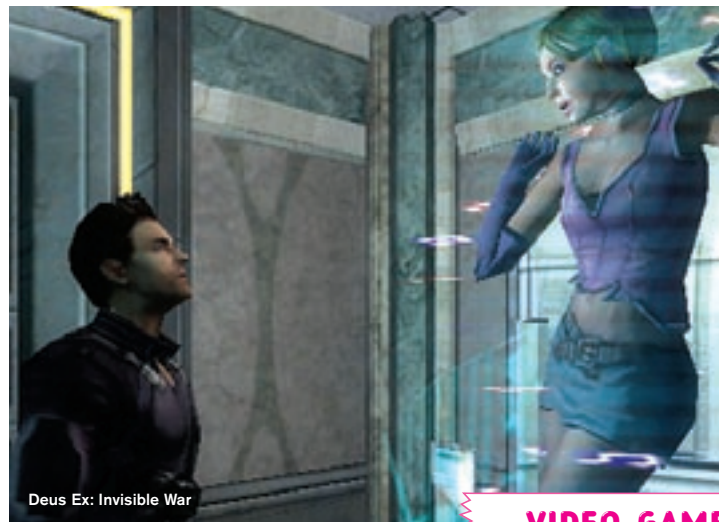
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VIDEO GAME REVIEWS



**DEUS EX: INVISIBLE WAR** (Xbox/PC; Eidos, \$39.99)

Combining the first-person shooter viewpoint with a sci-fi-soaked storyline, this sequel to the original *Deus Ex* is fun but lacks intelligence, artificial or otherwise. You're a bio-modified soldier who's got to escape from your home at the Tarsus Academy, which is under attack by terrorists. After escaping you must choose between often contradictory missions presented by warring factions. Luckily, if you screw over one faction, they'll instantly forget your transgressions in the next level. Despite the storyline's dumb logic, the graphics really kick ass with dynamic lighting and realistic physics. If anything, it's quite gratifying to travel around the carefully constructed scenes, and it's especially enjoyable to upgrade yourself with bio-mods for speed, stealth and bio-weapons. Not perfect, but definitely fun. *Andrew Smith*

Rating:

**NFL STREET** (PS2/Xbox/Gamecube; EA Sports, \$49.99)

EA Sports has already established itself as the leader in console football titles with its immensely popular Madden franchise. With the release of *NFL Street*, they've just tightened their Darth Vader-like choke-hold on the throats of their would-be competitors. Released under their "Big" line of sporting titles, *NFL Street* takes the pigskin out of the million-dollar stadiums and onto the broken concrete of your neighborhood park. Street is a joy to play, with tight controls, excellent visuals and a ton of trash-talking, ball-chucking, bone-crunching play. The game's soundtrack is also strong, featuring an all-star lineup that includes Nas, B-Real, the X-Ecutioners and Killa Mike. Best of all, *NFL Street* is online enabled, meaning you can take your team and skills to the 'net to battle for ultimate virtual football supremacy. *Tae Kim*

Rating:

**RATCHET AND CLANK: GOING COMMANDO** (PS2; Sony, \$39.99)

Being a huge fan of the first *Ratchet and Clank* from 2002, I've been dying to get my hands on this for some time. The gameplay on this second installment is mostly the same as before: you jet from planet to planet completing objectives and ultimately try to save the universe from evildoers. As you go along you gather new weapons and gadgets such as the "sheepinator," which transforms your enemies into sheep. Baaaah! As before, the levels are long, and the environments are as tripped out as your lucid dreams after eating pot cookies. The original soundtrack is solid once again, featuring funky techno riddims. Even if you don't really care for adventure games in this genre, such as *Crash Bandicoot* and *Jak*, you should consider trying this one out. After all, you can't go wrong when you go commando. *K Sagstad*

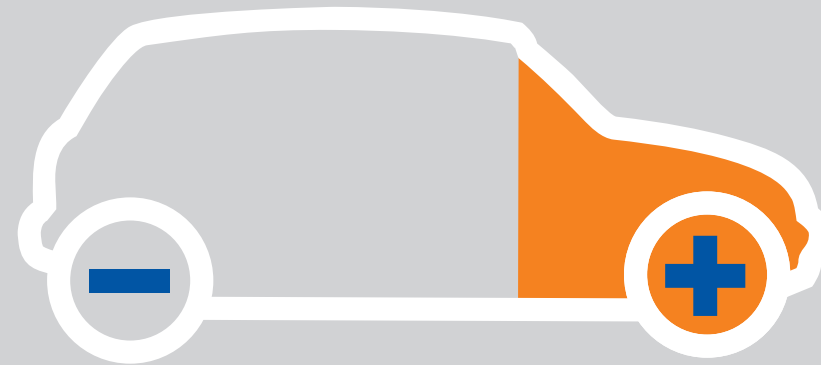
Rating:

**SONIC HEROES** (Playstation 2/Xbox/Gamecube; Sega, \$49.99)

Pound four Red Bulls, eat ten Pixy Sticks, and put on your sunglasses: now you're ready to play *Sonic Heroes*. The latest in the Sonic the Hedgehog franchise finds you again racing around a brightly colored cartoon world at breakneck speed. A pop punk soundtrack plays in the background as you capture gold rings and battle cute enemies like spear-toting robots and flying ships. Rather than playing as Sonic (or fuzzy sidekick Tails), you are forced to operate as a team of three, which enables you to perform stunts like getting on top of one another's shoulders to hop over a wall or running abreast to capture more rings. This game has little or no strategy, making it perfect for novice gamers and your ADD-addled nieces and nephews. *Sonic Heroes* also zips by so fast that it often feels like it's playing itself, a feature that will doubtlessly make skilled videogame fanatics feel like they're the ones that have been played. *John Dark*

Rating:

RATING KEY: = Ultra-Violence = Girl Friendly = Stoney = Geek Fest = High Anxiety



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I'M NOT TRYING TO COMPETE WITH ANYONE. I'M NOT TRYING TO BE ALL THAT.

Amp Fiddler

# GIMME SOME MO'

AMP FIDDLER AND FRIENDS AYRO AND JOHN ARNOLD ARE ON A MISSION TO REAWAKEN THE COLLECTIVE SOUL OF URBAN MUSIC. SOUND AMBITIOUS? NOT IF YOU'RE THE A-TEAM.

WORDS PETER NICHOLSON IMAGES WILL CALCUTT

## THREE THE HARD WAY

People like to dis Detroit—the crime, the horrible weather, the potholes. But when it comes to music, few cities can boast a richer past or a more promising future. From jazz to Motown to P-Funk to techno, Detroit has consistently created some of the world's most modern yet heartfelt music. Today, three producers are leading a new wave of innovation, proving that hope springs eternal—no matter how fucked-up people say your backyard is.

Ayro (Jeremy Ellis), John Arnold and Amp Fiddler have all collaborated with each other, yet there's no confusing their individual styles. Amp Fiddler serves up soul with moments of hip-hop and house; John Arnold melds techno and jazz; Ellis channels Motown through broken beat. They all sport serious instrumental chops, a grasp of using technology to express emotion, and a desire to meld live and dancefloor dynamics. Their tracks get played globally, sometimes in succession at parties like Rainer Trüby's Rootdown in Germany, and radio shows like Gilles Peterson's WorldWide in the UK and Toronto's [www.milkaudio.com](http://www.milkaudio.com)—venues that feature not only broken beat, future soul and nu-jazz,

but all their forerunners. These artists may be on the same team, but they each play different positions.

## LET THIS BOY DO IT

The youngest in the lineup is Jeremy Ellis. Best known for his broken, vocal nu-jazz as Ayro, the 30-year-old Detroit native grew up in a musical family, was trained in classical piano, and has even taught the instrument. But Ellis is just as much of a virtuoso on Akai's MPC2000 drum machine sampler, tearing off blizzards of beats on the sampler's sixteen pads. His first single, "Let This," was lauded by the likes of Jazzanova and was licensed to half a dozen compilations.

Unfortunately, his astounding debut album for Omoa Records, *electroniclovefunk*, ran into the distribution problems that often plague small, new labels. Ellis has now also signed under his given name to Ubiquity Records, for whom he's currently recording an album in Puerto Rico. On *electroniclovefunk*, Ellis matches an ear for melody and harmony worthy of Stevie Wonder with hard, techy beats that are anything but retro. Similarly, his live performances marry the jacking groove of an expert DJ



(though he himself does not spin) to the undeniable charisma of a born performer. "I've basically become a one-man band performing like a DJ but all live with drum machines and keyboards," Ellis says over the phone from his Detroit apartment.

Ellis's masterful ease with the MPC sits comfortably next to his love of soulful melody, just as his classical background coexists with a recent past working with producers like Mike "Agent X" Clark and Alton Miller. Through his shows as part of John Arnold's Jazzhead, Ellis met these leaders of a scene, whom he was skeptical about at first.

"For a long time I viewed the techno scene as just crap and button-pushing bleepers. But that was when I was like 18 and getting into groovy shit like James Brown—I needed to see like 14 people doing it [live]. But then you come to realize as a dancer that [techno producers] are really making music. With Jazzhead, that was one of John's missions—to make a band sound like a DJ."

#### DJ WITH AN AXE

John Arnold himself has grown to love DJing, despite also coming from a background of classical training (in his case guitar). And though Arnold's DJ sets—like his debut album *Neighborhood Science* on Ubiquity—are full of melodic, futuristic funk, he isn't afraid to go hard. Ever since his first release for Derrick May's Fragile imprint, Arnold has been affiliated with some of the big "names" in Detroit, but has charted his own path through a fusion of jazz and techno.

"The legends are our mentors, but we're in the community with them as well," Arnold says as he waits outside San Francisco's Betalounge to play a live webcast with an MPC, a laptop running Ableton Live and his trusty red Gibson. "That's how Carl Craig's been to me, and Kenny Larkin, Stacy Pullen, Mike Clark—I've always respected those guys. But they've also respected me for my individuality and what I can do, because I'm coming from more of a 'trained musician' standpoint."


Arnold also regularly performs acoustic shows with his Blackman & Arnold jazz combo. But lest anyone think of the man as a guitar-nerd, know that *Neighborhood Science* is full of slamming dance tracks, from the stop-and-go bass drum thump of "I Can Be" (which features Amp Fiddler on vocals) to the snappy syncopation of Herbie Hancock's "Rough," which augments Ayro's crooning with a hook that morphs from an acid squelch into an acoustic guitar lick.

As quiet, sincere and unassuming as Arnold is, his album is forceful and confident, with complex contrapuntal rhythms balanced by solid melodies and insistent bass lines. His sweaty, grimacing live performances find him using his guitar as a MIDI controller, wringing effects for every last drop of emotion, squeezing his eyes shut and often inadvertently singing along with himself, completely lost in the sound.

Arnold headlined the Friday night outdoor show at last fall's Candela Fest in Puerto Rico, while Ellis did so on Saturday. Both musicians held the diverse crowds rapt, enthralled by both the passion of their performances and the otherworldly, futuristic sounds they summoned. Veteran producers like John Beltran and Orin Walters from Bugz in the Attic were seen grinning and shaking their heads in disbelief as Ellis journeyed from rhythms that echoed earlier performances by local *bomba* percussionists into deeply funky, acidic squelches, and back out to the uplifting, sing-along glory of his collaboration with John Beltran, "Kissed By The Sun."

#### MEAN FIDDLER

The weekend of Candela, Arnold was busy practicing guitar parts for a series of UK shows he later played with Amp Fiddler. They still have people buzzing. Joseph "Amp" Fiddler is a direct link to Detroit's storied past, for he toured with George Clinton as a P-Funk All Star from 1987 to 1996. He's performed in the studio for artists as diverse as Prince and the Brand New Heavies, and was in San Francisco to record with the Hieroglyphics crew when I met up with him. Although he admits to missing out on Detroit techno's salad days due to his



I'M NOT A PERFECTIONIST. I DON'T LIKE TO TWEAK THINGS UNTIL THEY'RE ABSOLUTELY PERFECT.



John Arnold



Ayro

extensive traveling, Amp's since made up for lost time with local producers. From collaborations with the shadowy Kenny Dixon Jr., a.k.a. Moodymann, to teaching Jay Dilla of Slum Village how to work an MPC, Amp has been a Detroit player of the highest order. With *Waltz of A Ghetto Fly*, he steps to the front, his liquid touch on the keys and captivating, aged-single-malt voice taking center stage.

*Waltz* is pure soul heaven. With a bit of help from friends like Arnold, Jay Dilla and George Clinton himself, Amp has crafted an album of raw, immediate emotion that ranges from the uptempo protest anthem "Love & War" (co-produced by Kenny Dixon Jr.) to the syrupy, whispering groove of "Unconditional Eyes." Tying it all together is Amp's unique croon, a bur-nished tenor that tells of escaping dead-end trouble, years on the road, and the hope that keeps him hungry. Like a sax played for all its worth, Amp's voice bends into tune, sometimes cracking like the click and squeak of a reed, and always speaking volumes. "I am definitely *not* the perfect singer," says Amp with a deep chuckle. "I'm not trying to compete with anyone. I'm not trying to be all that. My focus is on the songs, the messages, on having fun and conveying the emotions I'm feeling in the songs."

Amp's emotional involvement with music began with hearing his five siblings play everything from Motown to Hendrix as a youngster, and became a viable career thanks to George Clinton. "I was kinda in a troubled scene. We were sitting around the house holding some guns and shit because some guys were going to come by and shoot us up—some stuff had hap-pened with my brother. It was dramatic and [Clinton] kinda saved me out of that." Amp has stayed connected to his family, with Thomas "Bubz" Fiddler co-writing and playing bass on four tracks from the new album. Amp has also introduced a new generation of Fiddlers to music—the single father has a 13-year old son, Dorian, who plays trumpet on "Love & War."

Championed by many DJs before the start of the Iraq war, "Love & War" also contains a small artifact of the recording session that makes Amp howl with delight when I mention it. "Aww, yeah! That's my phone ringing there! That's the kind of thing I like to leave in... I'm not a perfectionist. I don't like to tweak things until they're absolutely perfect. Somebody said to me, 'Man the album is nice, but it sounds like it could be mixed better.' I don't give a *fuck!* What's important is that people get where I'm coming from and they can dance to it and feel the music."

With its superb, classic songwriting, Amp's album certainly has the best chance of making the widest audience feel the music. But although their broken beats might initially confuse some novices, Ellis and Arnold's efforts show the same sincerity, an effort to harness the sometimes overwhelming technology that surrounds us to the human emotions that tie us together. "People understand [music]," says Amp. "Even when it's electronic, when there's a real emotional element, a voice, they feel that it's genuine. And that's going to contribute to the record being the kind that stands the test of time."

Ayro's *electroniclovetfunk* is available on Omoa Music. [www.omoamusic.com](http://www.omoamusic.com)

John Beltran's *Neighborhood Science* is out now on Ubiquity. [www.ubiquityrecords.com](http://www.ubiquityrecords.com)

Amp Live's *Waltz Of A Ghetto Fly* is out now on PIAS. [www.pias.com](http://www.pias.com)

## FIVE DETROIT ARTISTS TO WATCH

**MALIK ALSTON:** With an appearance on the seminal *Detroit Beatdown* compilation and collaborations with Reclouse and John Arnold, Alston is on the rise. On his new *Caterpillar EP* for Third Ear, this producer and vocalist's shifting time signatures and quirky instrumentation up the ante. [www.third-ear.net](http://www.third-ear.net)

**ANDRÉS:** It wouldn't be Detroit without a mystery man. Andrés has rumored links to both Moodymann and Slum Village, but what is known is the strength of his funky, gritty house tracks for Mahogani, including a self-titled CD-only album.

**STRAND:** Brian Bond, Brian Boyer and Kech Harrington craft sublime, liquid Detroit techno that pairs subtle melodies with lush rhythms for a timeless

sound. Their singles for Amsterdam label Delsin and Anthony "Shake" Shakir's Frictional are gathered on the excellent *Messages*. [www.delsin.org](http://www.delsin.org)

**JIMMY EDGAR:** Also recording as Kirstuit Salu vs. Morris Nightingale for M3rck, this 20-year-old recently released the *Access Rhythm* EP for Warp. Full of hip-hop bounce and sleekly programmed glitch, Edgar's sound balances hooks with random elements of urban texture. [www.jimmyedgar.com](http://www.jimmyedgar.com)

**SZYMANSKI:** His debut single for Omoa, "Lover's Quarrel," featured John Arnold on guitar and Ayro on keys, and both cite Mark Alphonse Szymanski as an up 'n' coming talent. Szymanski seamlessly strings loops together for an organic, jazz-funk feel. [www.omoamusic.com](http://www.omoamusic.com)



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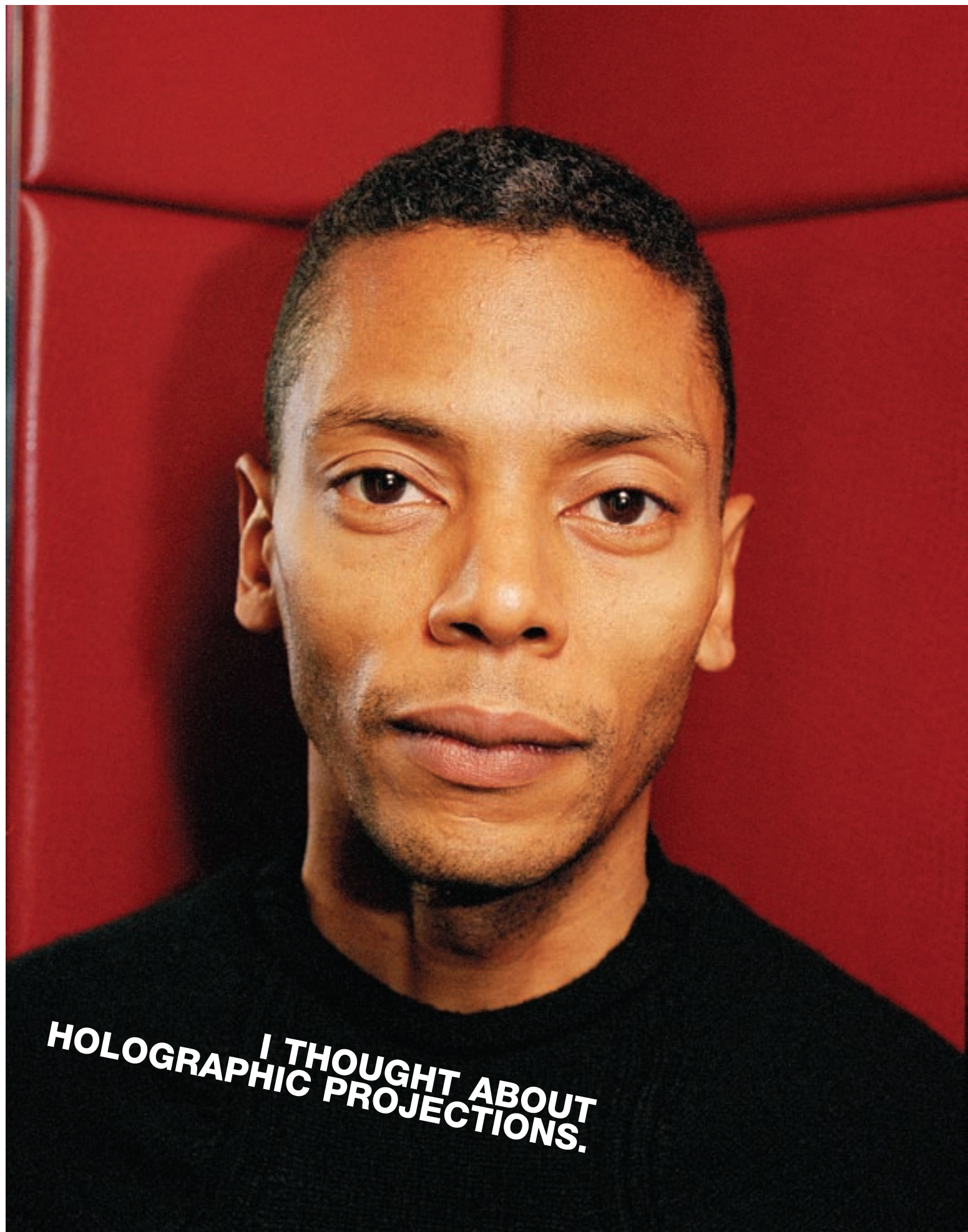
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I THOUGHT ABOUT  
HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTIONS.

# GENERAL MILLS

ALWAYS PRECISE, SOMETIMES PRICKLY, TECHNO PURIST JEFF MILLS EMBARKS ON A NEW PROJECT: DVD DOCUMENTARIAN.

WORDS DAVE STENTON IMAGES TOM OLDHAM

Jeff Mills has been DJing for nearly 25 years. His sets as The Wizard, broadcast across Detroit's airwaves in the mid-'80s, introduced his trademark frenetic DJ style; reputedly, after his airtime was halved, Mills resolved to play just the best bits of each record, and the style stuck. His career as a producer spans almost the same amount of time; after initial forays working with industrial music outfits, Mills, Robert Hood and "Mad" Mike Banks established Underground Resistance—the main focal point of Detroit's so-called "second wave" of techno artists.

Since leaving UR over a decade ago, Mills has amassed an impressive, influential body of work, including dozens of singles on his own Axis and Purpose Maker imprints, and albums for Germany's Tresor and the UK's React. Mills is also one of techno's most popular DJs whose trademark four-hour sets have, for better or worse, found more success in Japan and Europe than the US.

As a follow-up to his ambitious rescoring of Fritz Lang's 1926 silent film classic *Metropolis* in 2000, Mills is releasing a new long-form effort, *Exhibitionist*. This compilation CD and DVD release is an apt successor to 1996's 38-track masterpiece *Live At The Liquid Room, Tokyo*, the mix CD that solidified his status as a superstar DJ.

Jeff Mills, the person, is the antithesis of Jeff Mills, the DJ: he's soft-spoken, articulate and willing to take his time while introducing and developing his ideas. For completely different reasons, both aspects of him are impossible to ignore. As Mills's music has always been solidly about the future, this conversation concentrated on his current and future efforts to enshrine the electronic music experience in a media capsule intended for use by generations to come.

**XLR8R: How did you decide on the concept for *Exhibitionist*, and how long did it take to come about?**

**Jeff Mills:** The idea came [about] not too long after recording the *Live At The Liquid Room* CD, back in '96. [I was] thinking about [how to simulate] what the DJ does, [as well as] manipulate his presence or image inside of a venue. I thought about holographic projections. I did research for a few months and discovered that it's really much more complex than just projecting on a wall: you need to have multiple mirrors and the lighting has to be correct. I thought that was too difficult and not consumer-friendly. So I scaled down to just filming myself DJing in multiple angles. That's how I arrived at this structure, and it took about seven to eight months to complete.

**XLR8R: Do you hope that *Exhibitionist* will eventually be viewed as a historical document?**

**JM:** It's a time-based [work]. [The intention now is] for people to watch and for DJs to see how another DJ mixes, but we were also thinking that it could be something to look at or recall very far in the future. [It will be a device] for someone wanting to remember what DJs used to do. When we're maybe, I don't know, 70, 80, 90 years old, we'll have this piece of information that you can look at and [trigger] the memories of how parties used to be, how the music used to sound, and what record labels and vinyl used to look like. It's documentation.

There are four parts to the *Exhibitionist* project. The first is a DJ mix-DVD and CD. The second is a film of myself in a recording studio, capturing how I make music. I program all the different parts [in the studio's machines]; the film captures this creative process from beginning to end. The third installment is to go into a record shop [and] put multiple cameras [in there]: film the people as they're listening to the music, trying to decide [what they like] and which ones to buy. And [the listener] will be able to hear what [the purchaser in the store] is listening to, how much they're listening to and how they decide whether it's good or not. I think we'll be able to learn a lot from just watching people. The fourth part of the project is to film people before, during and after a party—just filming the people, what they look like, how they act. And so all four parts together will be a very provocative way of looking [back] at how we used to [relate to] electronic music and techno.

**XLR8R: Could this be your last ever mix project?**

**JM:** Yes, it could be, because it encompasses so much information.

**XLR8R: Aside from the cities where you've lived and worked in the US—New York, Chicago and Detroit—it's safe to say that you are still a relatively unknown artist in America compared to Europe and Asia. Why do you think that is?**

**JM:** The mainstream [music] press never really gave much attention to what was happening in Detroit. I'm part of that group, so not many people know who I am, what I've done and my contribution to electronic music. Almost the opposite is true in Europe, or in Asia. I think a lot has to do with the people. In Europe [the development of electronic



**I DON'T WANT TO COME OUT AND SAY THAT THIS MUSIC IS NOT FOR EVERYONE, BUT THAT'S THE TRUTH.**

music] didn't just happen so easily. The scenes in these countries didn't develop from one person having an idea that you should come to these parties and see all these DJs. It was a collective of ideas. It was a demand from the people to have particular DJs and particular parties. Lots of people in lots of countries in Europe went through a lot of trouble just to want to have a party.

Not to say that Americans didn't have to go through the same things, but I think the desire [to make electronic music popular] was much stronger [in Europe]. In Europe, people fought really hard and lost lots of money, went through lots of trouble in court-lawyers and things like that—but I think the desire was much stronger to have [techno] music as part of the culture.

In America I see that similar things happened—and what people did to resolve the problems I'm not quite sure. Did they just say "forget it"? The party got shut down—that's it? Did they try to find lawyer to make sure that the problems don't happen again? I just think that desire burns a little hotter in Europe and in Asia than in America.

**XLR8R: Does a desire for greater recognition in the US provide any inspiration for you?**

**JM:** For many years I thought it would be really interesting to do a residency somewhere [in America]. I tour America in March. This will be my first indication of what's happening [here for techno music].

**NOT-TO-MISS MILLSIAN ACTIVITIES**

The Music and Maschine (M & M) techno congress, which Mills had a hand in establishing in Berlin, continues to operate. Further conferences are planned in other European cities, as well as the US and South America over the next few years.



Atlanta. Some dates are subject to confirmation. Check [www.axisrecords.com](http://www.axisrecords.com) for further details.

**XLR8R: Have you thought of working on a project specifically for a US audience in order to address this?**

**JM:** When we released [the album score] for *Metropolis*, we were trying to find places to show the film [and score]. It wasn't easy in America [to get it booked]. Even though the film was [an American classic], it wasn't easy to convince people to show it. And we had a very long list of where we'd showed it outside of America: Centre Pompidou in Paris, Royal Festival Hall in London. We tried to show it in Chicago, but no one returned our call.

**XLR8R: Finally, does it annoy you at all if people enjoy your work on a musical level but refuse to engage with the ideas and themes behind it?**

**JM:** No, because I know full well that when I release something not everyone's going to like it. Some things are made with the intention that people are not going to understand, or they're not going to like it. But it has to be on the vinyl, or on the CD, as it's related to other parts of the project. What really makes me upset sometimes is when people try to determine exactly what it is, and what my intention was, and that it didn't work...so that's generally the most frustrating thing about making music. I don't want to come out and say that this music is not for everyone, but that's the truth, and that's just the way it is.

[www.axisrecords.com](http://www.axisrecords.com)



Jeff Mills and Laurent Garnier (left) are planning a joint tour, commencing May '04, to "promote more awareness of the art of dance music". According to Mills: "As DJs/spokesmen on this special tour, our goal will be to make people love music, any type of music.

In our discussions, we both agree that doing something like this is the least that we can do to give back to the art form that has given both of us great careers and a future."



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**MF DOOM**  
*Special Herbs V. 5 & 6*  
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**ROB THE VIKING**  
*Beats To Pillage and Conquer By*  
The sonic mastery of acclaimed beat master Rob the Viking (Swollen Members) has finally been compiled into a full-length album. Includes bangers for Son Dooie (of Funkdoobiest), Abstract Rude and Buc Fifty. An onslaught of beats executed to perfection.



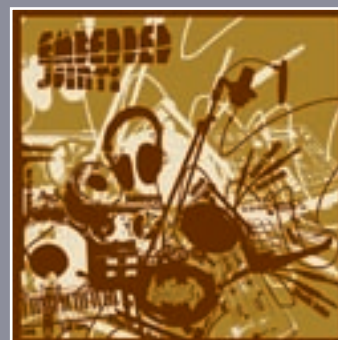
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ONE DAY CHILDREN WILL DUST MY MUSIC OFF AND PLAY IT, AND REALIZE THAT I'M THE SUPREME MUSICAL GENIUS OF MY GENERATION.

# SQUARE LOGIC

BASS VIRTUOSO AND ELECTRONIC BEATS SENSATION TOM JENKINSON MAKES MUSIC AS ENLIGHTENING AS HIS VIEWS ON THE UNIVERSE AND OUR PLACE IN IT.

WORDS ROB GEARY IMAGES EVA VERMADEL

Tom Jenkinson has never delivered a note of music that was easy, halfway, or pandering. As Squarepusher, his recordings have blazed along with break-neck musical invention; as an interview subject he races ahead with controversial—and sometimes contradictory—statements that pile atop each other at full speed, lashed together with the same pretzel logic that has guided his otherworldly sounds. Jenkinson's early albums on the Rephlex and Warp labels were full of hyper-speed jungle, blinding post-acid programming and nervously funky bass playing weaving between the beats like Bootsy Collins in rush hour traffic. In 1998, Jenkinson took a hard left with *Music is Rotted One Note*, largely dropping breaks to fully delve into the pungent, metallic fusion sounds of *Bitches Brew*-era Miles. When the breaks returned, they came back with a vengeance. *Go Plastic* pushed Jenkinson's programming experiments into more contemporary directions, with the demolished UK garage anthem "My Red Hot Car" leading the way. 2002's *Do You Know Squarepusher?* brandished another slab of accidental bizarro-pop on its title track, in addition to disorienting fusion and occasional noise assaults.

With his seventh album, *Ultravisitor*, Squarepusher takes an 80-minute journey into the heart of darkness. Bubbling through the album are bits of the junk Jenkinson has turned into gold throughout his career: snippets of Amen breaks, impossibly knotty programming and catchy synthesizer melodies careen off each other. Welding it all together are the album's "live recording" elements, including the astounding nine-minute semi-live freak-out "Tetra-Sync." Tom Jenkinson transmitted the following to *XLR8R* via email just before *Ultravisitor*'s release.

**XLR8R:** Now, several albums into your career, how do you keep it fresh? Tracks like "Lambic 9 Poetry" have the surge and wane of structured live jams. Since it's just you in the studio, presumably with overdubs, how do you keep generating ideas to work from and react to?

**Tom Jenkinson:** It's always difficult to discuss how I work. My initial reaction to such questions is "why would anybody care?" I've never had much interest in the way other people work. Apart from a few special cases, I've always assumed that my approach would in any case be better. It's apparent that the predominant problem in music is that people try too hard. That's because music has been demoted from the lofty world of sublime escape and reflection to being predominantly a fashion statement. Like fashions in clothes, the bulk of people don't know what to do, so they follow a pattern. Incidentally, I don't think that there's anything undignified in this—all I have ever done is follow a pattern. By luck, and nothing else, my pattern is liked by other people. But it's neither original nor visionary. That's not what makes my pattern in any way successful. It's simply that it's my own, the pattern that has always been apparent to me. The mistake one sees all around is that people have lost touch with or ignore their own pattern. This is because there's an unprecedented amount of pressure to be "something," and following one's own humble path may not lead to this. Note that this isn't always in the guise of conformity. In fact, this pressure is just as likely to want you "not to conform"—have dirty hair, chains on your ripped jeans, be aggressive... It's all, in the final analysis, the same. It's just behavior that is

becoming of nobody. The big lie behind all this is that none of it makes you special, none of it makes you anything other than broke. You can only ever be one thing: yourself. And in our era of fractal conformity there is plenty of pressure not to be.

**XLR8R:** *Do you react to outside events like news or politics when you write music, or is it more self-generated, a product of imagination?*

**TJ:** Politics is a grubby affair. Politics and politicians should be out of sight. Instead they're so large that they're the only thing one can see. What's funny is that everybody expects politicians to be "accountable" and "reasonable," when all politics could ever be is a murky expedient to keep any one society running along, smoothly or otherwise. As far as my reaction to politics, it's becoming too surreal to take seriously. 9/11 was the ultimate slapstick event that ever occurred, yet was of the spheres of business and politics, not of humor. Politics is the new, extremely black comedy. Music should always be a product of the imagination—any attempt to tie it in with "real life" tends to kill it stone-dead. Of course, that doesn't stop anybody buying it, but just because people can walk around and buy records doesn't necessarily mean that they're not stone-dead, either. Who wants "real life" referred to in music?

**XLR8R:** *What role does technology play in your music now?*

**TJ:** Technology uses us as much as we use it. Technology is something beyond mankind. Modern (Western) man sees himself as the progenitor of technology, as he tends to see himself as the source of, and the whole point of everything within his sight. Planet Earth was once the center of the Universe. In the West we've never recovered from this being proved incorrect. We're angry at the science that removed us from the pedestal, and want it to recompense us. But all it does is remove us further from the center. The harder we look, the more obscure we become. It's difficult to accept that we really are the center of nothing whatsoever. To pretend that one is the center of attention always produces a backfiring result. Look at anybody persistently in the "limelight"—look what it does to people. You don't need to have a subtle intuition to see that a persistent effort to be in the center turns you into a complete caricature. Michael Jackson is the ultimate symbol of our age, because he shows the ultimate outcome of a vain need to be loved. In a world that's overshadowed by intractable problems such as climate change, terrorism and Oprah Winfrey, we all need to be loved.

**XLR8R:** *Many of your record titles seem to respond to each other. For example, you had a track called "My Sound," then "My Fucking Sound" three years later. Are the similarities in some of these titles clues to tracks that express some of the same ideas, or might comment on each other?*

**TJ:** There seem to be "streams" of continuity in my work. I do represent that by giving numbers to certain track names. This is obviously only partly relevant to anybody, as some of the track numbers have never been released. I have just released "Abacus 2," but "Abacus (1)" was made in 1993, and wasn't released. The continuity is something that's apparent to me, but I wouldn't expect it to be the case for anyone else. Of course, the ostensibly irreconcilable "Don't Go Plastic" and "Go Plastic" spring to mind. This is the crowning riddle of my career. It's the tension between these two directions that continues to facilitate my work. If there could be said to be a decent allegory for what "gets me fired up," it's this!

**XLR8R:** *Do you hear or react to any current pop/chart stuff, and do you hear an influence from what you and people like Aphex Twin have been doing?*

**TJ:** Some musicians are "inevitable." Aphex Twin was inevitable—when he appeared it was something that was subtly expected, and that's his success. That is the also the root of my success. Squarepusher was always going to have happened. It's coincidental that I fill these shoes. An inevitable musician cannot help but change his musical environment, because he's the first to admit something that everybody has always known but never admitted. It doesn't matter what is said about it, whether it's deemed high or low, childish or mature. It simply comes as a relief for that knowledge to be admitted and brought out into the open.

**XLR8R:** *Ultravisitor plays like a full live show right down to the mental bass solo with crowd cheers ("C-Town Smash"). Did you go in thinking that the album should play that way in total?*

**TJ:** I think the live versions of the tracks show people that, although their own stubbornness may prevent them from engaging with my music, other people [are] cheering in the background. They realize that although this music is obscure, it can't be totally inaccessible because other people seem to like it. Because it's obscure, but not totally inaccessible, this makes it cool. This makes people buy it. One day their children will dust it off and play it, and realize that I'm the supreme musical genius of my generation. This means I'll still be able to play gigs when I'm an old fart with no ideas. Hopefully.

**XLR8R:** *Is there an ideal way to experience Squarepusher records? It's sometimes said about certain tunes or types of music, "Oh that's best heard in the pub with some friends," or "I like to just sit and listen to jazz" or something along those lines. Do you ever go back to your own records?*

**TJ:** My music, although it's said to sometimes be aggressive, doesn't suggest a context—it will simply work differently in different places. That's because the identity, or the interface between listener and musical content, is formless. I'm scarcely interested in my old records. I'm scarcely interested in my new records. I just like making them, that's all. Once it's done, it means nothing to me. I'm not a librarian, or an archivist. Life is now, not yesterday. "I like to just sit and listen to jazz". I like to jazz around. I like to blow some jazz tubes. I like the sound of a so-fa-la ti-do, me. This is the highest dignity, to be able just to sit and listen.

Ultravisitor is out now on Warp Records. [www.warprecords.com](http://www.warprecords.com)





# PAST PRESENT FUTURE

**HARD DRIVE CRASHES, STAGNANT RECORD DEALS AND AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE-IF ANYTHING, VLADISLAV DELAY IS A SURVIVOR, AND HIS NEW ALBUM AS LUOMO IS BUT HIS LATEST TRIUMPH.**

**WORDS HEATH K. HIGNIGHT IMAGES DIRK MERTEN ARTWORK NOPATTERN**

When Vladislav Delay began debuting pieces of *The Present Lover*—his second deep-house album under the guise of Luomo—at a triumphant Mutek Saturday night show nearly two years ago, the response was unanimous. The name Luomo, said pundits, would soon be on the lips of every club aficionado on the planet. *The Present Lover*'s innate sensuality and its rapturous, retrofitted disco anthems would catapult thoughtful dance music back into the fray, due as it was to be released by the powerhouse conglomerate BMG. This quiet Finnish guy—who had just moved to Berlin to live with his soulmate Antye-Greie-Fuchs of Laub—was to be crowned king of modern house music, merging the worlds of warm analog dance music and laptop glitch production into a unified whole. From the spent floor of Montreal's monstrous Metropolis dancehall that June night in 2002, Luomo appeared omnipresent, destined to slay club-goers worldwide as he had that sweaty, electric evening.

But you've likely not heard that much about Luomo or *The Present Lover* in the past two years. If anything, it's more likely you've heard about Vladislav Delay, the name under which this unassuming young Finn has released experimental electronic music for Mille Plateaux, Staubgold and Chain Reaction, and his singular approach to crafting electronic sound.

Perhaps the best way to describe Delay's music—released under the

names Vladislav Delay, Uusitalo, Luomo, Sistol or Conoco—is pearlescent sound. Delay's music, while lustrous, lacks the crystalline transparency of Moodyman and Theo Parrish's house, SND or Pole's textural glitch compositions, or Ricardo Villalobos and Matthew Dear's latter-day crisp techno anthems. Instead, his music exudes a glowing opacity, overlaid with layers of digitized rhythm that race like lightning to a gleaming, harmonic edge.

When encountering Vladislav Delay albums such as *Entain* (2000) or *Anima* (2001), both for Mille Plateaux, this sparkling sound rolls lithely like a grain of noise or static, gathering up so much smooth, atmospheric mass around it that before long, you're left with a prized gem of architecturally structured experimental music. On Luomo's 2000 Force Tracks album, *Vocalcity*, this evocative sound emerges from a recovered disco-funk memory and is allowed to fester and swell into a hot, throbbing techno-house passion for what seems like hours at a time. On *The Present Lover*, that sound has evolved into a heady, sensual minimalism, with sultry unisex vocals slivering forth in waves of deep bass drives, and enough sexual energy to melt the Eiffel Tower. Like light over a pearl, Delay's music electrifies as much as it mystifies.

As is often the case for artists with incredible promise, Vladislav Delay, now 27 years old, found himself on the wrong side of corporate policies



**I LIKE TO THINK THAT WHEN I USE SOUNDS,  
I CREATE STUFF THAT'S UNKNOWN TO PEOPLE:  
UNKNOWN ENVIRONMENTS.**

NEXT YEAR, I'LL  
CELEBRATE MY  
EXISTENCE!



and politics in the last two years. *The Present Lover* got shelved worldwide except in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. It's a testament to the album's quality that it nevertheless landed on numerous critics' Best Of 2003 lists on both sides of the Atlantic.

But the fact remains: two years is a long time to delay an album, and during that time, Delay released only remixes and a new one-sided *Luomo* 12-inch on the little cottage label Scheinselbständig. Non-stop touring aside, what happened in the last two years since *Mutek* 2002, during which time Delay—who produced no less than five full-lengths in 2000—released zero albums? And what's this about a new label and a new Vladislav Delay album? *XLR8R* checks in with the blonde-headed wonder boy to find out.

**XLR8R:** *The Present Lover is timed to come out around Winter Music Conference in Miami, which should raise your profile in the dance community. How did it impact you to have it held up for a year in the US?*

**VD:** Of course it's a little of a bit pain in the ass [because it's been] so slow. It's interesting how somebody can really take so long a time to get things going on...but with these labels, BMG in Germany was just holding it for half a year and shit like this. So I have to be patient. And yeah, if I were just *Luomo* as an artist and had to pay my rent with it, I would be quite restless already. But I have so many things to do all the time that I forget about these things.

**XLR8R:** *So you think it's for the best that Kinetic, a former BMG subsidiary, now will release the record over here.*

**VD:** Kinetic was impressed by it, they really like it. They seem quite enthusiastic about it.

**XLR8R:** *What's on the agenda for this year?*

**VD:** Well, I have these plans, all these ideas for new music, and also for my own label, called *Huume*, which is what I want to concentrate on. That will be for my own releases—I don't really plan to sign anyone.

**XLR8R:** *What prompted you to put together the label?*

**VD:** Basically, things are really fucked up if you work with other labels—they just can't cope with the current [business] situation. I've always had quite good opportunities to release the music I wanted on various labels that took care of [everything], but lately it seems like I've gotta take care of myself, and I believe I can do it better. I mean, I probably can sell lots of records, but that's not my intention.

**XLR8R:** *This must be an interesting development for Achim Szepanski, founder of Force Inc. and Mille Plateaux records—the labels that put out so much of your material. Are you divorcing yourself from those labels?*

**VD:** No, there's actually a new Delay album coming out on Mille Plateaux soon. It's called *Demo(n)tracks*.

**XLR8R:** *Explain the spelling.*

**VD:** I started slowly a while ago to make a new Delay album. There were some really early demo takes, and then came a demon: my whole hard drive—and back-up—got destroyed.

**XLR8R:** *Scheisse!*

**VD:** Yeah, the whole complete shit. I had worked here and there a little bit, and it had progressed into a nice album, and then it just vanished...just disappeared. I spent \$2000 on data recovery, but they couldn't get it back. I got left with the earliest demos, which I tried once or twice live, and I made the new record out of these dribblings, these bits. So, it's kinda sincere.

**XLR8R:** *This is the warmest, most emotionally upfront Vladislav Delay album yet. Part of that has to be the live drumming by you. Are there other kinds of natural, traditional acoustic sounds on the album?*

**VD:** Besides drums, not really. Sometimes I use acoustic recordings, like field recordings, but mostly just drums.

**XLR8R:** *It's an interesting direction for the Delay sound, considering that a prime characteristic of your music is the way in which you make naturalistic sound environments from completely foreign sounds. As much as Anima feels like an environment, like a busy, steamy city street, the actual sounds feel alien and manufactured.*

**VD:** But that's a very important point. I like to think that when I use sounds, I create stuff that's unknown to people: unknown environments. I like that thought! Like *Anima*: it was totally played with electronics. I played with electronic instruments of course, but the whole album—even the synthesizers—was triggered with pads and drum sticks. I mean, I don't know how to program sounds—I know how to hit record, and I know how to play the sample. That's how I do it.

**XLR8R:** *Let's talk about Berlin. Lots of energy and creativity in that city always, but recently it seems to be turning into a mecca. Ricardo Villalobos and Monolake are there, Richie Hawtin just moved there, and for many of your peers, it seems a stint in Berlin is a rite of passage. Where do you fit in?*

**VD:** It's funny, all these guys live here, but I don't ever see anyone. I mean, definitely, whenever you go out, you see them; it's like the fucking plague.

**XLR8R:** *The plague?!*

**VD:** The audience is entirely artists. Like the people you [mentioned], they all seem to enjoy the Berlin scene. I mean, it's a nice party, it's a good place to have a party and social things, but it's really not for me at all. But it's really kinda like a collective and a social place for these artists. It's not really so competitive like New York or London or whatever...it's much more easygoing, and it's so much cheaper here. Even when you go to places like Yugoslavia or Prague or Warsaw, they are all more expensive.

**XLR8R:** *So there's your new label, the new Luomo album, The Present Lover, and a new Delay album on the horizon. As quiet as the last two years appear to have been for you, it now sounds like you've really got a lot of things going on.*

**VD:** It might sound like there are lots of things going on, but it's quite easy-going, and no pressure...I really like doing these things, and I've come the short way, of course, just scratching the surface. But I've come to a point where I can say, 'OK, these things need to be done differently so that I don't waste my energy on stupid things!' So, I'm definitely looking forward to 2004. 2003 was really bad, really really messy—lots of hassle, never being home, then moving, that shit. Next year, I'll celebrate my existence!

*Update: Vladislav Delay's Demo(n)tracks album will not be released by Mille Plateaux, but by Delay's own Huume imprint later this year. The Present Lover is out now on Kinetic.*



Since the late '80s—both on his own and as part of the vaunted Masters at Work with Kenny “Dope” Gonzalez—Bronx-raised veteran DJ/producer Louie Vega has helped make New York house a global institution. If you care about dance music, you can't avoid the man's influence via his countless gigs, productions and remixes. With *Elements of Life*, the solo studio debut he recently released on his Vega Records imprint, Vega enlists help from his wife, singer Anané, and fellow house masters Blaze to go deep into his musical present and past, forging a familial, pan-Latin audio memoir.

**Louie Vega:** You hear my keyboard player in the background? I'm doing a mix for the Azuli label's Choice series with all these classics on it like “Magnificent Seven” by The Clash and “Bra” by Cymande. He's doing some solo work underneath to give it a special feel, y'know? We're havin' fun over here.

**XLR8R: Have you always wanted to do a live band?**

**LV:** I've been doing it since the Marc Anthony album [*When the Night is Over*, 1991]. I had to put together a band for that because Tito Puente asked us to open for him in Madison Square Garden, and that was a big deal for us. I watched my uncle [Fania All-Star singer Hector Lavoe] and my father lead bands while I was growing up, but I never thought I'd lead a band. As we rehearsed for this album, I basically was conducting the band without really knowing it. So I'm on stage with this band as a DJ and leader.

**XLR8R: Do you lean towards making themed albums?**

**LV:** I've kinda been doing that all along, too. For example, the Marc Anthony album in 1991, where I brought in Tito Puente and Eddie Palmieri—that was the seeds for [MAW side-project] Nuyorican Soul. Growing up in New York had a lot to do with it, being inspired by people like Quincy Jones and Stevie Wonder and Fania All-Stars...

**XLR8R: Was *Elements* inspired by any specific themed albums by any of those artists?**

**LV:** I was actually more inspired by my wife and son. It was really personal. Also, I was traveling the world while I was making it, so a lot of that came into it. That's why there's a whole African/jazz/Latin/soul thing, the whole Brazilian thing came about, the street sounds, the Latin stuff from back in the day, the rumba stuff...all that just came together.

**XLR8R: There's a lot of found sound on it, like recordings of your son, and the crowd in “Summer Night in Spanish Harlem.” It seems as if you wanted to capture an environment.**

**LV:** Definitely. I especially wanted young voices on the album. And on “Summer Night,” I was trying to capture a bunch of friends hanging out together and jamming with my *congueros*, House of Rumba, who play at my residency, Dance Ritual. They truly know how to play. So we got that communal feel. It was like 20 friends in the studio, havin' a little wine, havin' a good time.

**XLR8R: Were the songs with Blaze the seed songs for this album?**

**LV:** Yeah. In 1998 after my son was born, I had this groove with Latin and jazz and African flavor in it. I brought it to those guys and told them I wanted something universal about life. [Blaze's] Josh [Milan] pulled out these lyrics and sang 'em in a real Donny Hathaway style, and we just cut it. My friends were telling me, 'Man, this record is a *classic*.' People played it for a year in the clubs. And Mel Cherin from West End Records was the first to tell me to make a whole album in that style.

And then soon everything happened here in New York. I was watching my tiny son watch these buildings go down on TV, and he was just smiling and not knowing what was going on. And I was thinking, 'Man, he's comin' into this world, and I wanna make a record that just lets him know it's gonna be alright, and we're here to protect him always.' So I got together with Blaze again and told them I wanted to write another song. I played 'em a groove, and told them to write lyrics about my son being born, and that was “Brand New Day.”

**XLR8R: What was your biggest challenge in putting the album together?**

**LV:** I think it was linking four specific pieces: from the rumba bit, “Summer Night in Spanish Harlem,” to “Quimbombo” to “Canto Para Chango” to “Sunshine.” So that's a rumba into a salsa tune, then a Yoruban bata section, and building from there with some soul and Rhodes piano into a tune in English. The languages and styles changed up so much in those 12 minutes. I had nine musicians and singers in the studio at once all throwing down. There were just ideas flying. None of the musicians wanted to leave at the end because they were having a ball.

**XLR8R: Who's your favorite Latin musician of all time?**

**LV:** Can I say a band? I'd say the Fania All-Stars. That's kinda all of 'em, right? [*laughs*]

**XLR8R: What do you think of British broken beat guys like Afronaught and Seiji taking trips to Puerto Rico to make music?**

**LV:** Yeah, I know of at least one of 'em that's sticking around for eight months or something. And Osunlade moved out there. I think it's great. As producers, they're drawing something different from the island talent. They're both intertwining their rhythmic ideas and creating a new thing. Puerto Rico needs that sound, too, because there's great music, but they're way behind on the club tip. But now, see, you got Spanish dancehall, *reggaeton*—that's blown up down there and it's about to happen here.

**XLR8R: What main lessons have you learned making music?**

**LV:** I've learned how to make artists comfortable in the studio. Of course, I know much more about pitch now [*laughs*], so singers don't kill themselves when they sing to my tracks. I've learned how to tailor songs to artists, and also how to make the recording itself sound good. Basically, I've learned plenty.

*Elements of Life is out now on Vega Records. [www.mawrecords.com](http://www.mawrecords.com)*

# VIVA LA VEGA

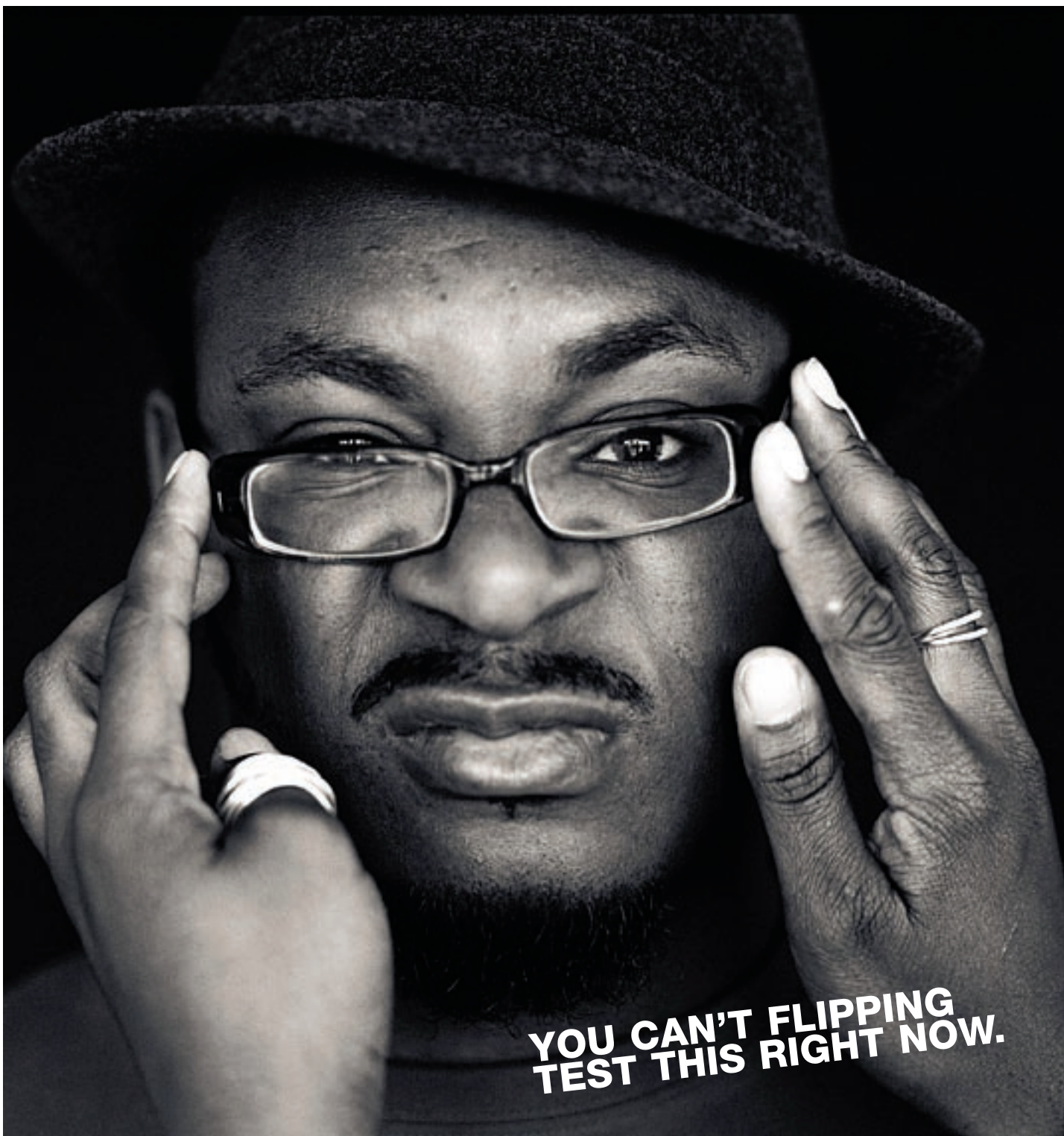
BROOKLYN HOUSE LEGEND LOUIE VEGA IS FOLLOWING IN HIS FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS IN HIS LATEST INCARNATION: LATIN BANDBLEADER.

WORDS RON NACHMANN



Louie Vega and wife Anané

WE'RE HAVIN' FUN  
OVER HERE.



# UP AND UP

EVER WONDERED WHAT AFROBEAT MIGHT SOUND LIKE IN THE 21ST CENTURY? LOOK NO FURTHER THAN TY, THE VETERAN LONDON RAPPER WHOSE NEW ALBUM, *UPWARDS*, OFFERS A TOUR THROUGH THE ANNALS OF BLACK BRITISH MUSIC.

WORDS MARTIN TURENNE IMAGE TOM OLDHAM

You could say that Ty is a man bridging booms. Too young to figure into the heyday of Covent Garden's '80s hip-hop scene, London's leading lyricist did a yeoman's work during the 1990s, seeing the UK hip-hop community through its darkest days. Now, with bounce bubbling in Brixton and grime going gangbusters in the East End, Ty is concocting a new strain of British rap: Afro-hop. On his sophomore album, *Upwards*, the dapper don of English hip-hop drills through the pavement to unearth the form's African roots, summoning the same propulsive rhythms that once sent Fela Kuti into overdrive. Delivered in his graceful baritone, the MC's musings on love and life resound with a realness rarely heard in Stateside rap. A dozen years on from his first stage show, Ty's time has finally come.

**XLR8R:** You started MCing at the end of the Covent Garden scene in the early 1990s, but your first album [*Awkward*] only came out in 2000. Do you regret not having released material earlier in your career?

**Ty:** I came in during the twilight years of hip-hop culture here. It was during a period when everyone was losing hope and not making records, not signing artists, not touring. That was when I was at my height in terms of my appetite. I was just ravenous at the time, but I wasn't able to make any records. But in some ways, that might have been for the best, because I've been forced to learn other skills, [like] management or production. I'm probably making better records now than I would have if I hadn't taken the time to grow all-around.

**XLR8R:** On the new album, "*Do You Want More?*" stands out as particularly important, almost as if you're calling out the younger generation of London MCs.

**Ty:** That song is definitely me having a stab at people, but [it's] also me saying, "You know what? You can't flipping test this right now. I'm dealing with my 'tings. I've been nice about this, but now it's time for me to start taking trophies home and never bringing them back."

**XLR8R:** Are you taking a stab at cats in the grimy garage scene?

**Ty:** Nah, I haven't got time for that. I'm not really calling out any individuals—I'm calling out a mentality. I'm calling out that mass of people that only play each other's records and only book each other, and sit about in the corner moaning about [influential BBC Radio hip-hop DJ] Tim Westwood.

**XLR8R:** What do you think of Dizzee Rascal's album?

**Ty:** That record has definitely slapped me. He's done his thing to the point where he no longer needs anybody to exist. For me, he is definitely a role model to follow. As an MC, I can hear his skill as an orator, and it's wiping the floor with the so-called heavyweights in my division. Look at what this boy has gone and done! He's just taken the UK's black youth energy and put it on a pedestal and he's said, "We are here." As rappers, we were supposed to be doing that. We're supposed to be the window for people to look in and say, "Oh! That's what England is."

**XLR8R:** How did the collaboration with [Fela Kuti's drummer] Tony Allen come about?

**Ty:** I was Tony's MC for the last year on his tour, and I kept telling him that I wanted him on my album. It would make no sense for us to be pushing this Afro-hop idea and not do this. So he flew into London [wearing] leather pants, came down to the studio and spent half a day drumming it out. "The Willing" is the only song that he played on, but as far as a feeling, he definitely touched the whole album.

**XLR8R:** How does your conception of Afro-hop fit in with your British identity?

**Ty:** People in this country have not admitted the fact that black culture is more than just American or West Indian. In London, James Brown is a legend, Bob Marley is a legend, but Fela Kuti is not a legend. That has an effect on us as Africans, in that we don't pay enough attention to our heritage. When I came out, I made it clear that I'm Nigerian. A lot of black people in the community have really appreciated that, because they've grown in up in England assuming that it's not hip to be Ethiopian or Brazilian or Cuban. Don't get me wrong: I don't have a chip on my shoulder about being African. This is not some spear-chucking scenario. I just want people to feel good about the music that makes me feel good.

*Upwards* is out now on Big Dada. [www.bigdada.com](http://www.bigdada.com), [www.tymusic.org](http://www.tymusic.org)

## THREE COLLABORATORS WEIGH IN ON THE MAN KNOWN AS TY:



**DREW** (*Upwards* co-producer)

We came from an era where we were listening to people like Hijack, Demon Boyz and London Posse, and Ty was one of the few people who maintained that vibe through the mid-1990s. The younger generation is getting more into Ty now, so in time they'll recognize how important he was to building the scene here.



**WAYNE BENNETT**  
(producer, Lotek HiFi)

Whenever he performs, he's got a good command of the stage and an honesty that's lacking in a lot of people. I believe him. A lot of black UK musicians will feign some sort of Jamaican angle in their music, even if they're from Africa. But with Ty, you don't get any of that. What you hear from him is always the truth.



**TONY ALLEN** (drummer, Afrobeat legend and *Upwards* contributor)

We are coming from the same place, you know? Although he is British-based, his music still has the African feeling, and that is something I can hear when I listen to him as a rapper. It's cool to hear someone doing hip-hop on Afrobeat, and doing it in a way that shows respect.



# MONDAY MOVES ON

TEN ALBUMS INTO HER CAREER, SINGER MONDAY MICHIRU IS STILL STRIVING TO WRITE THE PERFECT SONG.

WORDS PAUL SULLIVAN IMAGE MICHAEL SCHMELLING ARTWORK NOPATTERN

You're in an underground jazz club night groaning with the sounds of pumped-up West London-and-Tokyo-made broken-beat house tracks. Through the blaze of beats and modal chords rises a soaring voice sounding as confident as it is dynamic. Out of the many female vocalists in dance music, only one has been embraced by prominent DJs from Gilles Peterson to Japan's United Future Organization, and played in diverse clubs from NY's storied house venue The Shelter to tiny jazz bars in Shoreditch. Only one's voice sounds like Monday Michiru.

Michiru is blessed with a sparkling set of pipes that can climb from husky jazz lows to angel peaks in a heartbeat. She's worked with some of the coolest cookies on the planet (everyone from dirty-house stars Bassment Jaxx and West London soul daddy I.G. Culture to Japan's DJ Krush and Mondo Grosso). And she's created no less than ten artist LPs in as many years.

But she's still not satisfied.

"I still haven't written *the* song," Michiru explains from her home in Aquebogue, Long Island, which she shares with her musician husband and their young daughter. "The song that makes me feel like I've been able to write exactly what it's all about—truth of life compacted and expressed in one song. And until I've felt like I've written [that] song, I have to keep writing because it bugs me that I hear it, I feel it, I know it's inside of me, and I haven't gotten enough skills or true spiritual depth yet to really define it in sound." If any singer should be able to write that perfect song, it's Michiru, whose artistic background would render other singers green with envy.

Michiru was born in Tokyo to two professional jazz musicians—Japanese pianist Toshiko Akiyoshi and American saxophonist Charlie Mariano—and spent her formative years growing up between Japan and the States. The music that was in her blood from birth compelled her to study modern dance and ballet in New York at the age of eight, classical flute in Los Angeles at 11, and flute and voice at Michigan's prestigious Interlochen Arts Academy from '79-'81.

In the early '90s her personal and musical life changed direction quite dramatically when she landed a fluke lead actress job playing an opera singer in a Japanese film. The movie took her to Tokyo, where before long she was counting Japanese underground cognoscenti like U.F.O., DJ Krush, Mondo Grosso and Kyoto Jazz Massive as friends, and providing them with vocals for their groundbreaking acid-jazz and trip-hop sounds.

Michiru found success quickly with such acid-jazz anthems as "My Foolish Dream" (with U.F.O.), "Wagamama" (with DJ Krush, taken from her debut LP *Mangetsu* on Japanese label Kitty) and "Sunshine After The Rain" (remixed to poignant effect by

Masters at Work), which gave her an international profile. She was also featured on the early Jap Hip Jazz sessions with Mo' Wax label founder James Lavelle, and recorded early LPs such as *Maiden Japan* (Kitty), which elevated her to well-respected levels within many scenes.

Between 1993 and 1998, she became increasingly embroiled in the international club movement. "I liked the sanctuary that underground clubs provided me," she says of the period. "It gave me a feeling that I was doing something that wasn't necessarily pop or mainstream, that I was helping to create a new genre. But more and more I became disillusioned with the whole scene in that it became a 'scene,' with its own clichés and do's and don'ts..."

Michiru got to a point where she was getting bored with she calls "redundant beats, chords and melodies, and themes, and a certain shallowness and instant gratification of club music." By the late '90s, she became more involved in the arranging, producing and recording side of her work, and coming up with more mature albums like the Afro-Latin-tinged *Optimista* and *4 Seasons* (both on her main recording outlet, Polydor).

2002 saw her deliver *Episodes In Colour*, her most well-rounded project to date and an album that featured heavyweight jazz players like Dave Gilmore and Seamus Blake. "*Episodes...* was the first footsteps towards a settled-down and solidified artist's road," reveals Michiru. She's gone further down that road on her tenth and most recent album, 2003's *Moods*. Like its predecessor, *Moods* is a definite coming-of-age project, an erudite and lyrical combination of all of Michiru's varied influences (jazz, Latin, electronic, soul) gently kneaded into intricate, reflective songs of a spiritual nature.

"If I had to make a comparison between all my projects and *Moods*," she muses, "I would have to say that when I do my own project—which *Moods* was—it's in complete selfishness, expressing all I want to without thought to whether it's going to be commercially viable or not."

Does this mean that—putting aside her frustrations about having not written "the song"—Monday can cast a nostalgic glance over her shoulder and feel good about her long and colorful career? "I really feel I'm in a great place," she affirms. "It's getting harder and harder for me to get an album deal or sell a nice amount of records to make the business side happy, but I know that I'm at my most creative in terms of what I'm writing. I don't have time to practice because I have to spend more time doing house stuff and taking care of my child and family, but my voice seems to have picked up a deepness of life."

Monday Michiru is on tour in the US with Gav Smith from Mr. Bongo's Records throughout April.

IT BUGS ME THAT I HEAR THE SONG—I FEEL IT, I KNOW IT'S INSIDE OF ME, AND I CAN'T REALLY DEFINE IT IN SOUND.

# Wear It's At

The whole world thinks Americans love behemoth malls, Wal-Mart and assault riffles more than we love art, stylish fabrics or unique accessories. And who's to argue with them when the majority of Americans are perfectly happy rocking Old Navy board shorts, Sean John sweat suits and Abercrombie button-up dress shirts? To prove the haters wrong, *XLR8R* found five hot-hot North American independent style outlets serving up one-of-a-kind knits, tees, bags, bracelets and other urban garments. These are the brave ones going it solo against an army of chain store Orcs who'd love to have us all marching in one straight, pleated-khaki line. If looking good is your rage against the machine, gear up for battle at these super shops.

Compiled and edited by Vivian Host and Tomas



## *Sirens and Sailors* (Los Angeles, CA)

**Mission:** To provide a laboratory for new LA designers, and a showcase for up and-coming talent.

**Highlights:** Owner Jennifer Dawn Phillips scours the city for unique designers to carry in her aquamarine-colored and mermaid-infested Echo Park boutique. Items like blazers and sailor pants from Grey Ant, draped jersey-knit miniskirts by Javier, mod futurist leather handbags and Belts from Bits, and deconstructed vintage from Portland's Claire LeFay keep stylists from *Q*, *Nylon* and *Rolling Stone* coming back for more.

**Find them at:** 1102 Mohawk St., Los Angeles; (213) 483-5423  
[www.sirensandsailors.com](http://www.sirensandsailors.com)



*Boutique Fly*  
(Montreal, Canada)

**Mission:** To keep our feet on the ground and have a store where people are encouraged to follow their dreams; a place where people can be themselves and not fit into preconceived notions of fashion or individuality.

**Highlights:** To get a sense of what's happening in Montreal, look up Fly. The three-year old store—created by 24-year-old Arianna Rabinovitch and partner Richard Morris—lets students from LaSalle College art school design the window displays, plays CDs from artists appearing in Montreal, and features local artists and designers both on the racks and in an in-store art gallery. Alongside Fornarina, 55DSL and Red Plus, the store stocks Canadian designers like Kitchen Orange, Fidel, Castle Dream and Lydia Luckidis.

**Find them at:** 1970 Ste-Catherine West, Montreal, QUE, Canada; (514) 846-6888  
[www.boutiquefly.com](http://www.boutiquefly.com)

*I Heart*  
(New York, NY)

**Mission:** I Heart was conceived as a non-traditional retail store. We wanted to do something a bit more underground, establishing a comfortable atmosphere that serves as a creative space for fashion, music and art.

**Highlights:** Downtown girls Jill Bradshaw and Antonia Kojuharova have created the female equivalent of spots like Rivington Club and the Staple store, only cooler. One-of-a-kind canvases by Kenzo Minami, Kostas and Surface 2 Air's Daniel Jackson anchor this brand new Nolita outpost, where clothes from Eley Kishimoto, Zakee Shariff and United Bamboo, CDs from DFA and Output, and books by Victionary and DGV sit next to deerhead hat hangers and grenade oil lamps. The store plans art installations and limited edition custom collections so show your love.

**Find them at:** 262 Mott St., Nolita, NYC; (212) 219-9265



*Monkey Business*  
(Chicago, IL)

**Mission:** To provide an alternative means of income for creative individuals through an environment that is progressive and nurturing.

**Highlights:** One-of-a-kind gifts roost at the Windy City's Monkey Business, which sells handmade cards by Tennis Anyone, wallets by Nemesis and jewelry from owner Lena Kim. The store is also a gallery space and DIY incubator that not only exhibits local artists, but offers on-site crocheting, silk screening and book-binding classes.

**Find them at:** 1942 W. Chicago Ave., Chicago; (773) 269-3133  
[www.monkeybusinesswebsite.com](http://www.monkeybusinesswebsite.com)



*Factory People*  
(Austin, TX)

**Mission:** Factory People is a multi-usage space dedicated to exploring the intersection where fashion, music and art meet.

**Highlights:** With a sound system to rival any mega-club, and a mix of independent designers and cutting-edge streetwear, this Austin fashion outpost loudly proclaims, "Don't mess with Texas!" (in a good way). Owners Le and Thomas Popov have packed the joint with Evisu denim, Surface 2 Air tees and Puma Anti-taste bags, plus brands like Punk Royal, Hummel, Anna Sui and Hysteric Glamour (the store is the only Stateside outpost of this cult Japanese line). Factory People will be hosting parties during South by Southwest and the Austin City Limits music festival in September, so keep your eyes peeled.

**Find them at:** 1325 S. Congress Ave., Austin; (888) 322-8002  
[www.factorypeople.com](http://www.factorypeople.com)



*Boutique Fly* Red velour off-the-shoulder top (CAN \$20); Black zebra-print v-neck (CAN \$20)



*I Heart* Pieter Houtenbos Grenade lamp (\$60); United Bamboo Linen Jacket (\$352); Colette CD (\$32)



*Sirens and Sailors* Bits Accessories purse (\$110); Hayley Starr Little Prince tie (\$110), Little Twin Stars purse (\$110) and tank (\$95)



*Monkey Business* Math books by David Wien (\$5); Lena black-and-white bracelet (\$8)



*Factory People* Miraharaya Suhiro Pumas (\$170); Han Cholo Turntable Pendant (\$97); Surface To Air SGL Shark tee (\$40)

*Dykehouse*  
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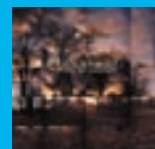
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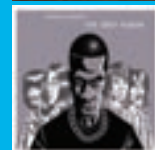
Blockhead



**BLOCKHEAD MUSIC BY CAVELIGHT** *Ninja Tune/UK/CD*  
**DJ SIGNIFY SLEEP NO MORE** *Lex Records/UK/CD*  
**DJ DANGER MOUSE THE GREY ALBUM** *self-released/US/CD*  
**FOG HUMMER EP** *Ninja Tune/UK/CD*  
**RJD2 SINCE WE LAST SPOKE** *Def Jux/US/CD*



Indie hip-hop's young turks are a self-aware bunch. Artists such as Blockhead, DJ Signify, RJD2, Fog and Danger Mouse know that they represent the antithesis of crunk, and they're proud of it. Their jams aren't intended to get the party started—they're most likely to be put on when the party's already over. And for all the vice that bedroom production might imply, there's an inherent sobriety in their work. It seems these cats can shut the blinds, but can't shut out dark reality. On their albums, beguiling melodies waft and wind around insidiously dour moods as the MPCs gently weep.



Of this pack, RJD2 is the anomaly by being the most (con)texturally concrete. On *Since We Last Spoke*, his second full-length for Def Jux, RJ's bluesy collagist bap is less haunting than humming and/or hurtling. The record resembles his work as Soul Position (with MC Blueprint) far more than it does his groundbreaking 2002 album *Dead Ringer*; it's more melodically cohesive and his dramatic cut 'n' paste cut farther away from DJ Shadow territory.



While RJD2 has eschewed guest MC appearances to become more of a songwriter in his own right, DJ Signify—who has produced for 1200 Hobos and Anticon—ropes in Sage Francis and Buck 65 to provide guest vocals on his debut full-length, *Sleep No More*. His beats still creep stealthily underneath, but are at times obscured by these MCs' eccentric personalities. Nonetheless, Signify's production is shadowy yet crisp, its



softly falling autumn leaves of sound contrasting the pop shimmer of mainstream hip-hop's fake palm trees.

Unlike Signify, New York's Blockhead (a frequent collaborator with Aesop Rock) is capable of making bleakness bump, which is probably why he's leading the new recruits over at classic downtempo label Ninja Tune. *Music By Cavelight* resembles Signify's work with its atmospheres of hazy reflections and introspection—one imagines disembodied voices and fleeting flickers of clarity forming fire-cast shapes on the roughly hewn walls of Blockhead's bedroom as he produced the record.

The *Hummer EP* from Midwestern outfit Fog is similarly shadowy, but far more shambolic. It's an assemblage of indistinct associations that only gel in the most Jell-o sense of the word—the tracks are sometimes jiggly, sometimes watery and often full of and-the-kitchen-sink clutter.

Of this group, DJ Danger Mouse—who has also collaborated with Sage Francis and is Signify's Lex Records labelmate—most overtly mines the gap between countries, content and context. Having produced an album with New York MC Jemini that drew on sun-blotched psychedelics and bedrock-solid Brooklyn boasts (2003's *Ghetto Pop Life*), Danger Mouse follows up with the bootleg *The Grey Album*, cobbling samples from the Beatles' *White Album* together as beds for the verses of Jay-Z's *Black Album*. The word "grey" suggests dilution, but Danger Mouse acts more like a filter, creating playfully finicky funk that bursts forth like bright sun through the clouds. The concept of *The Grey Album* represents the new breed of hip-hop producer: a conceptual tailor, betrothed to a life of labors of love and progressing at the speed of his own mental strut. *Tony Ware*



Jessica Miller



**cLOUDDEAD TEN *Mush/US/CD***  
**cLOUDDEAD** has always been the best of the Anticon/Mush alt-rap stable, walking the fine line between sublime musical and poetic brilliance and art-school nonsense with a tangible finesse. *Ten* is a more focused and developed album than its 2001 predecessor, constructed from fragments of Americana, concise imagism and driving, nostalgic themes that stay with you for days after listening. It's almost impossible to convey the brilliance of this album without adding myself to the list of pretentious pundits doing cLOUDDEAD injustice, so I will say only this: imagine the best American free verse—from Whitman to Kerouac to Sarah Jones—set to the most evocative soundtrack conceivable, and you have *Ten*. *Jamie Collinson*

cLOUDDEAD



**2MEX**  
*Image/US/CD*  
 The fantasy of 2Mex is better than the reality of 2Mex. You want to root for this LA-reared, Spanglish-popping MC the same way you once had faith in Kid Frost. But those were younger, more idealistic days, and 2Mex lacks Frost's alternately menacing and amusing gangsta pretensions. On this self-titled album—which comes a mere five months after his last release, *Sweat Lodge Infinite*—2Mex leans towards cute, self-deprecating numbers, like the deliciously cheesy “Only as Good As Goodbye,” and “Baby I Ain't Joking,” in which he raps, “*Why would someone so pretty and smart fall in love with an underground MC?*” 2Mex's insecure moments are sometimes charming, but they can't rescue an album cluttered with throwaways. *Rachel Swan*

**BABY DAYLINER**  
**HIGH HEART & LOW ESTATE**  
*Brassland/US/CD*

Bridging backgrounds in street strut and swooning swagger, Brooklyn's Baby Dayliner creates feppish funk—in both the bass-borne beat boogie and overcast emotional sense. Baby Dayliner woos the whoosh of synthesizers; he broods, dapper and dour, over semi-baroque bump. Literate and limber, he croons over pithy plinks and sly po(m)p, reminiscent of the Magnetic Fields' Stephen Merritt. Songs are imbued with a melancholy melodic pirotouetting, as if they were played through a New Romantic music box—a reality not far off as Dayliner performs live accompanied only by Roland's Dr. Rhythm. Brisk, crisp, bittersweet and breezy-like prime Clarke/Gore Depeche Mode—Baby Dayliner is a twilight bridge between sincerity and tongue-in-chic, between fey rap and synth-pop's new world order. *Tony Ware*

**BEANFIELD**  
**SEEK**  
*Compost/GER/CD*

On a quest to produce an album entirely without samples, German duo Beanfield returned to the roots of soul by recording their third album the hard way—live. The medium fits these Beans well: their downtempo style is an elegant mish-mosh cut evenly with Latin, funk, soul, African rhythms and jazz (think horns a-plenty). Fans might recognize the

throaty voice of Bajka (from their gorgeous track “Season”) on *Seek*, as well as new-age references to age-old clichés about life and spirituality. Despite ditching founding member Tobi Meggle, percussive tracks like “Cargo” remain quintessentially Beanfield: lovely, soothing melodies that keep pace with a steady, human pulse. *Janet Tzou*



**BLACK HEART PROCESSION + SOLBAKKEN**  
**IN THE FISHTANK 11**  
*Konkurrent/NETH/CD*  
 Amsterdam-based distributor Konkurrent couldn't have facilitated a better match-up for their studio-jam series, In the Fishtank, granting grandly anguished San Diego chamber-poppers Black

Heart Procession their wish to hook up with grandiose Dutch post-prog rockers Solbakken for the weepiest hoedown this side of Nick Cave. But not so fast...or sad, as it were. Yes, BHP lead singer Pall Zappoli's growl-to-whine vocals battle Solbakken's guitar screech on the tragic downtempo tango “Voiture En Rouge.” But we also find Zappoli bemoaning his pooch on the eminently silly “Dog Song,” and the collaborators concocting the strangely kinetic, 6/8-timed “A Taste of You and Me” and the almost spaghetti Western tenor of “Things Go On With Mistakes.” Now *this* is intriguing. *Ron Nachmann*



**CRITERION & DOILY**  
*Broklyn Beats/US/CD*  
 Broklyn Beats performed a helluva feat by entering a crowded underground and maintaining a recognizable sound. Said sound typically plays out as jungle and hip-hop for brain-surgery-altered guinea pigs, as label owners Doily and Criterion demonstrate on this CD,

which compiles their past EPs. Doily fancies tossing drum machines into trashcans that then get rolled down steep hills. Her ramshackle, no-fi production is a relief in our age of antiseptic digitalia. Criterion mainly focuses on hung-over loops, picking at them like fresh scabs. In “Sole Controller,” he disembodies a porno-funk guitar riff that then jabbers itself to oblivion. And somewhere deep in this dancefloor-clearing mire, a savage intelligence lurks. *Cameron Macdonald*



**DATCH'I**  
**IMMALE AND FFEMALE**  
*Planet Mu/UK/CD*

Joseph Fraioli (Datch'i) was rarely mentioned in past zine articles about “digital-punk.” Strange, since his '99 debut [*Rec + Play*] embodied that tag with flesh and blood. Kid606 and half of the Tigerbeat6 posse often seem to be chasing after that record's trash-compacted IDM beats and Kool-Aid-drunk Nintendo melodies. With *MMale and FFemale*, Fraioli has matured, deftly composing analog drones and phantasmagoric choirs that haunt a Martian cathedral. The trademark Datch'i beats that chomp your woofers and tweeters are also in effect. Too bad this entire album could be mistaken for an Aphex Twin remix of Squarepusher's *Music is Rotten One Note*. *Cameron Macdonald*

**DDAMAGE**  
**RADIO APE**  
**UPON CYCLES**  
**000**

*Planet Mu/UK/CD*  
 It's always a surprise when melody wins out over mutilation on a new Planet Mu release, but lightning seems to have struck the same place twice here, with both dDamage and Upon Cycles showcasing the label's well-hidden softer side. The former utilizes booming cut-up breaks (think Akufen on a hip-hop tip) and samples so quickly and distorted they'll evade even the most ardent spotter. Upon Cycles' *Ooo* is much jazzier by comparison, and more melancholy in mood. Mu-re like this please! *Dave Stenton*

**DECOMPOSURE**  
**TAKING THINGS APART**  
*Unschoolcd/US/CD*

No doubt influenced by the Thomas Köner and Matthew Herbert school of sampling, every track on this album is made out of noises from a single object: “Scrabble,” for example, or “Matches” or “Toy DJ Playlist.” Of course, there's also the obligatory George Bush speech-raping number (“Speech”) and the self-referential and rather mundane “Sound Card Noise.” On the plus side, *Taking Things Apart* forces one to listen to quotidian objects in a new way. On the downside, there are few songs here, so unless you're a found-sound aficionado, you might find yourself wondering exactly why you're listening to noise. *Tyra Bangs*

**DEATH COMET CREW**  
**THIS IS RIP-HOP**  
*Troubleman/US/CD*

As the quest to re-release material from obscure '80s bands continues apace, the trendsetting Troubleman label graces referential musicians with something they can use—the entire Death Comet Crew discography. This four-piece—which included the outergalactic freestyle rapping talents of Rammellzee and production genius of Stuart Argabright (of Ike Yard and “The Dominatrix Sleeps Tonight” fame)—provided the template for the thousands of cut 'n' paste provocateurs and DIY electro-punks flourishing today. *This is Rip-Hop* is a jarring, at times apocalyptic, trip through an urban wasteland populated by decapitated breakdance beats, squalling guitars, blood-spattered sound effects and heaps of downtown attitude. Hottt—with three Ts. *Tyra Bangs*



**DEPARTMENT OF EAGLES**  
**THE WHITEY ON THE MOON UK LP**  
*Arcco-Quatermass/US/CD*

**CALLA**  
*Isota/US/CD*  
 Department of Eagles smudges the templates of Radiohead, the Beta Band and Beck with their own grubby, eclectic hands; the result is an album that's a cool kitchen sink-and-a-half of lo-fi folk, hip-hop, stictionary techno drill bits and post-rock cheek. Beautiful, beguiling, shifty and schizo, Calla's rumblings from nearly a decade ago are darker and moodier, with a black widow edge. “Custom Car Crash” is a highlight—a post-rock spaghetti Western laced through with a steel ribbon of cruelty. *Selena Hsu*

**DUAL CONTROL**  
**LEFT OR RIGHT**  
*Grand Central/UK/CD*

Genre seems both unrecognizable and pointless to debate on the debut album from Manchester duo Phil Styles and Mike Ball, though it does prompt the question of how exactly these 12 tracks fit together. Can funky jazz and brassy horns work next to sharp beats? Should soft guitar lulls criss-cross with technical scratching? Judging by the album title, maybe *Left or Right* means to pull in two different directions, as the technical is paired with the melodic, and traditional instruments trade off with experimental blips and tweaks. A little of this and a little of that may be inconsistent, but it makes for not too shabby of a first album. *Jenn Marston*



**DUB SYNDICATE**  
**NO BED OF ROSES**  
*Lion & Roots/UK/CD*

Dub Syndicate mastermind Style Scott's solid percussion and Adrian Sherwood's seamless mixology keeps roots dub alive and grounded, not flying off to melt in the sun. *No Bed of Roses*'s songs all maintain a steady cadence with bright keyboards, locked rhythms, and a slew of crooners who remind you that Babylon is more naked than ever with a Caesar in the White House. Given that protest songs dwell here, the instrumentation is a little too sun-kissed to articulate the rage. The exception is “Adam & Eve,” in which a shaman connects empire-lust with original sin through a napalm-smoked haze of echoes. *Cameron Macdonald*

**DYKEHOUSE**  
**MIDRANGE**  
*Ghostly International/US/CD*

Former Planet Mu recording artist Mike Dykehouse signaled his new direction with a reverent cover of Wire's soaring psych-pop classic “Map Ref. 41° N 93° W” on Ghostly's *Idol Tryouts* comp. With *Midrange*, he indulges his shoegazer rock fantasies to the hilt. Unfortunately, Dykehouse's transformation from IDM geek to guitar hero has been smooth—too smooth. A gooey sentimentality clogs many of *Midrange*'s 14 tracks. Dykehouse has a soothing, beige voice that gracefully glides over his music, but his 1984-style melodramatic stadium alt-rock and silky smooth interpretations of My Bloody Valentine's tone-bending guitar wizardry seem more like fanboy pandering than inspired homage. *Dave Segal*

**DYNAREC**  
**USER INPUT**  
*Delsin/NETH/CD*

The latest Delsin release is further proof that Amsterdam is the new Detroit—or, at the very least, a musical mainstay of equal importance. Put simply, *User Input*, the work of mysterious (I'm guessing Dutch) act Dynarec, is the best non-Drexcija-related electro album to hit the racks for years. A terrific balance is struck between metallic and melodic on these 16 tracks, which are seldom short of brilliant in their execution. *Dave Stenton*

**ENCORE**  
**LAYOVER**  
*Hiero Imperium/US/CD*

Listening to Encore's *Layover* is like going on a date with someone who's young, hung and full of you-know-what, but won't go past second base. Encore is yet another rising MC who is “conscious” in the safe sense of the word (this guy ain't Immortal Technique), capable of producing competent, enjoyable flows. On *Layover*, though, the beats outpace the rhymes, given the kick-ass studio effects of Jake One, Vitamin D and Architect. Tracks like “Traditional Slick Talk” and “Zigga Zigga” are headnodic but not classic, and

place Encore as an MC to watch out for a few years from now. This debut is solid, but vanilla—and you find yourself hoping he'll push it farther next time. *Rachel Swan*

**BRIAN ENO**  
**CURIOSITIES VOLUME 1**  
*Opal/US/CD*

The godfather of ambient music, Brian Eno, delivers this compilation of lesser-known tracks that fit together precisely because they never fit in anywhere else. Beautiful, uncluttered melodies are shot through with ghostly noises and soft, padding basslines while Eno's love of rhythm shines through on tracks such as “Ambient Savage” and “Manila Envelope.” Elsewhere, Eno's love of experimentation rears its head via a lovely organ solo on “My Lonely Organ” and sparse lyrical stylings on “Work/Wank”—pieces of music that don't quite fit together, but are nevertheless quite curious. *Julia Chan*



**EYEDEA & ABILITIES**  
**E & A**  
*Epitaph/US/CD*

Eyede & Abilities could swap names and it would still work. Eyede & A is a rhymy with numerous battle championships under his belt, yet he's able to spin complex yarns; he puts down a book's worth of lyrics on *E & A*, the duo's second album. Abilities is a turntablist with undeniable wrist skills and DMC titles, but he also drops hard-hitting involved productions. It's the way these two link up that propels *E & A*. When Abilities grinds out the shuffle-technical “Star Destroyer,” Eyede responds with a ferocious battle verse, and neither flags in intensity throughout. *Rob Geary*

**FAT JON**  
**LIGHTWEIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT**  
*Exceptional/UK/CD*

The ample beat constructor with a knack for manipulating emotions brings forth his third collection of solo compositions, following collaborations with beat merchants such as J Rawls and abstract electronic demi-god Pole. *Lightweight Heavyweight* merges the hopped-up swagger of blunted beats with ear-pleasing and beautiful melodies. “Talk To Me” sees tender keys and strings combine under earnest vocals, while “Everywhere” is a choppy percussive outing, with relaxed, somber word play and languid atmospheres. “Synopsis” has a happier vibe, courtesy of purring bass, dreamy keystrokes and airy brass. *Lightweight Heavyweight* is a commendable album full of slow-stepping, melody-rich cuts, steeped in instrumental hip-hop's teapot. *Jon Freer*

**FELIX DA HOUSECAT**  
**DEVIN DAZZLE AND THE NEON FEVER**  
*Emperor Norton/US/CD*

Felix Da Housecat has made many fine house tracks in his time,



**FUNKSTÖRUNG DISCONNECTED IK7/US/CD**

Michael Fakesch and Chris De Luca first released records of banging acid techno before mellowing out into a hauntingly effective, Autechre-influenced IDM/broken beat/hip-hop-inflected spin cycle that has seen them being credited as a formative link to Prefuse 73. *Disconnected* finds Funkstörung flirting with more populist pastures via traditional instrumentation, including live drums and cello, as well as utilizing intricate programming to alter a wealth of syrupy singer-songwriter vocals. Not surprisingly, though, the two tracks featuring Brooklyn MC Tes are standouts—even as Funkstörung strives to expand their sound, it's when they indulge their hip-hop influences that they excel. *Brian Paul*

but his new album under the Devin Dazzle alias—with its soulless synths, gay club-reject vocals, and sewn-together melodies—personifies everything that's old and dead about electro-pop. Chief offenders “Everyone is Someone in L.A.” and “Short Skirts” (with lyrics like “*sneaking in peep shows/stealing poppers and dildos*”) are the soundtrack to someone so high on their own fame that they've lost even the will to create a clever hook. Comfortably numb and uncomfortably dumb. *Tyra Bangs*



**FILBA**  
**LENT**  
*Spark/SPA/CD*

Lent is the Catalan word for slow, but you'd be forgiven for thinking Barcelona's Vicent Filba was referring to the fasting period before Easter. The music here is ascetic, particularly the quiet step-click of “Eucapt Sand” and the dark, cinematic tones of “Making The Most of It,” where bass tones drone mournfully like chanting monks. Perhaps this isn't surprising, coming from an artist who's recorded for Sub Rosa, Benbecula and Couchblip, but it still leaves you wondering how many nostalgic, subdued, boldly Autechre-influenced beep 'n' click albums one can stand to have in the collection. *John Dark*



**FRAGILE STATE**  
**VOICES FROM THE DUST BOWL**  
*Bar de Lune/UK/CD*

The downtempo duo of Ben Mynott and Neil Cowley returns with their second original chill-out LP, but be warned: its charm is marred. The epic guitar backbone of “King for a Day” evokes images of a man with long, wavy hair atop a cliff, passionately wanking on his filtered guitar as a camera swivels around him in his moment of musical abandon. Meanwhile, the flute and slow build of “At Last” and the gently swaying strings and filtered piano of “New Bassa” aim for a questionable sort of sincerity. *Voices From the Dustbowl* is an album too safe for even home listening. *Melissa Wheeler*



**FUNK D'VOID**  
**VOLUME FREAK**  
*Soma/SCOT/CD*

Something happens when you take a dour Scottish techno producer and place him under the Catalunan sun: he cheers up. Yes, following Funk D'Void's move away from rainy Glasgow, *Volume Freak* is his most purposefully melodic and soaring album to date. Still, it is his not like he's become Savath & Savalas or something. Underpinning these hopeful synths and the occasional moment of vocal melodrama

are the pounding, drummy, seven-minute long thud-whack techno tracks that Soma's been gridding out for years. So just consider *Volume Freak* the Funk D'Void for the starlit terrace rather than the dirty basement. *Vivian Host*

**SERGE GAINSBORG**  
**AUX ARMES ET CAETERA**  
*Sunnyside/US/CD*

Serge Gainsbourg may be perfect for seducing your girl, or even that weekend getaway in Le Car, but few people know that back in 1979 he single handedly introduced reggae to the French mainstream. Recorded with Sly and Robbie's emerging group, The Revolutionaries, *Aux Armes Et Caetera* is not only authentic dub on a croissant, but a masterpiece that still holds up today. Not content to just re-present the work, mastering engineer Bruno Blum also provides a second disc with dubwise versions, produced with authentic studio techniques from '70s Kingston. Since the French didn't even think about making dub versions back then, all we can say is to this re-release is *oui oui*. *Daniel Siwek*

**LAURENT GARNIER**  
**30**  
*Mute/US/CD*

From establishing techno and house music in his native France to co-authoring a recent book about his adventures as one of the globe's most respected DJs, it's difficult to find something that Laurent Garnier hasn't done well. With his last artist album, *Unreasonable Behaviour*, boldly straddling the techno and jazz genres, Mute has re-released Garnier's album 30, named for his age at the time it was originally produced. Expect the kind of deeply rhythmic, Detroit-influenced melodic techno that Garnier became known for many years ago, once upon a time, when it still felt new to fall under a DJ's spell. *Janet Tzou*

**GIRL TALK**  
**UNSTOPPABLE**  
*Illegal Art/US/CD*

No one has embraced the Top 40 boot-leg/mash-up craze more than Girl Talk. On their latest release, *Unstoppable*, R&B smutmonger Khia sings about her neck and her back over Richard Marx's "Right Here Waiting," and various clips and pops from perennial favorites like Snoop Dogg, Sean Paul, Jay-Z and P-Diddy are peppered throughout the disc. In a time when kids can barely sit through an entire album by just one artist (the horror!), this A.D.D. mix will keep them sedated and/or spastic. *Julia Chan*

**GREYBOY**  
**SOUL MOSAIC**  
*Ubiquity/US/CD*

Take the stop-start staccato of beat-box hip-hop jams, inject downtempo funk rhythms, and pare it all down with Andreas "Greyboy" Stevens's trademark minimalism and you're listening to what a body-rocker would sound like if those fluid moves could be somehow become audible. SoCal's Greyboy was one of the first Stateside peeps to suss out the heady possibilities of acid jazz, and this album is a culmination of past hip-hop 'n jazz, live funk, and turntablist endeavors. Check vocal stylings from Sharon Jones (of retro-funketeers Dap Kings), whose breezy hooks on "Got To Be A Love" will send a sudden electric charge right to your sexy spot. *Janet Tzou*

**HAFLER TRIO**  
**NORMALLY**  
*Soleilmoon/US/CD*

Andrew McKenzie marks his 25th year as Hafler Trio with this follow-up to last year's long drone piece, *No Man Put A Sunder*.

This gorgeously packaged album is supposedly based on words or vowels spoken by Einsturzende Neubauten's Blixa Bargeld, but as usual with this kind of thing, backstory is secondary. Disc one comprises a cavernous, hour-long unnatural mantric roar with bits of high-register feedback that bide their time inaudibly in the background. The world of discernible sound seems to twitter in the maw of the piece until it's all swallowed in a huge rumble 40 minutes in. Disc two's hour is relatively more kinetic, working from slowly shifting, sustained mid-tone chimes to vocal chants to high-register peals to Blixa's digitally stretched and twirled vocal. Meditative and massive. *Ron Nachmann*

**HEARTS OF DARKNESSES**  
**MUSIC FOR DRUNK DRIVING**  
*Schematic-Asphodel/US/CD*

I want to like this CD, with its jauntily drawn cover of dinosaur skeletons frolicking on a bright-colored tundra and being dive-bombed by dead pterodactyls. And let it not be said that I don't like the idea of mutant gabber sutured together with dance punk, glitch and sampler noise. But to be perfectly honest with you, listening to *Music For Drunk Driving's* 24 tracks—more like minute-long sound-bites, really—is like having someone shove hot poker in your ears while pulling off your toenails one by one. In other words, it's full of sounds that only a stegosaurus in a k-hole could love. *John Dark*

**J'S POOL**  
**THE WAVE MACHINE**  
*Nature/IT/CD*

Too many electronic imprints view innovation as being of overall importance—not so Nature, Marco Passarani's consistently impressive label. Nature artists aren't backward when it comes to pushing forward; instead, they retain an idiosyncratic quality that makes their music not just revolutionary, but rewarding to listen to. *The Wave Machine*, produced by Londoners James Dean and Mat Cohen, is the perfect example: introspective, late-night licks (usually complemented by vocalist Martha Tilston) accompany more immediate, invigorating grooves, but nothing is over-complicated just for the sake of it. *Dave Stenton*

**KILN**  
**SUNBOX**  
*Ghostly International/US/CD*

*Sunbox*, by Michigan-based three-piece Kiln, is a delectable album of fizzing, popping, gently breathing electronica, its dulcet melodies offset by soft burbles, clicks and shuffles that envelope the listener in a haze of synthetic noise. From the broad, sweeping opener ("Royal Peppermint Forest") through the crackling, minimalist beats of "Season," *Sunbox* succeeds in luring the listener into an unobtrusive yet ultimately engaging aural environment. As Ghostly International continues to expand their range, it's refreshing to see them remain firmly entrenched in underground sounds. *Christine Hsieh*

**KMD**  
**THE BEST OF KMD**  
*Nature Sounds/US/CD*

All you need to know about this disc is this: It's the best material off *Mr. Hood* and the controversial (and initially unreleased) *Black Bastards* albums. "Trial N Error," "Smokin' That Shit," "Peachfuzz," "What a Niggy Know..." all the great ones are represented here. Sparkling production? Check. Immaculate MCing? Check. Bugged-out basslines, wit, knowledge and underacknowledged classic material? Check times four. Fans of MF Doom should be hungry for the history lessons, and people who bought and lost these tapes back in the day will definitely appreciate having them again. Essential listening. *Pete Babb*

**LALI PUNA**  
**FAKING THE BOOKS**  
*Morr Music/UK/CD*

A beacon in the cliché-ridden indietronic field, Germany's Lali Puna kicks off its third album with "Faking The Books," a post-rocking headnodder whisked into the ether by Valerie Trebejahl's whispered incantations. Later, "Call 1-800-FEAR" picks up the pace, a live-sounding stomp on which the Germans wear their anxious Britpop influences as if willingly straitjacketed. While guitars figure prominently here, computers are never far out of the reach of producer Mario Thaler. He takes liberties with Trebejahl's voice at every turn, sprinkling her chopped utterances over analog squiggles and clipped percussive accents on such bedroom ballads as "Small Things." Fear not DSP fanatics; your favorite console-fiends have stayed on course. *Martin Turenne*

**SONDRE LERCHE**  
**TWO WAY MONOLOGUE**  
*Astralwerks/US/CD*

Norwegian Sondre Lerche follows up his acclaimed debut, *Faces Down*, with an equally disarming songwriting success. Still sounding retro in that Bacharach/Beatles/Beach Boys way, Lerche works on his lyrics this time and strips down the production. This familiar sound could easily get old, but *Two Way Monologue's* melodies have a completely engaging swell and swing to them. With Lerche on guitar (and enlisting the same producers and backing band), the arrangements are rife with cute pop flourishes from horns, piano and organs. And Lerche's dynamic and youthfully optimistic voice deserves a listen, even from those who have yet to embrace the joys of classic pop. *Liz Cordingley*



**LANGUIS THE FOUR WALLS** *Plug Research/US/CD*

If Languis's prior album, 2002's *Untied* on their own Simballrec imprint, left you confused as to which camp the Argentinean duo belongs in—electronic or post-rock—*The Four Walls* settles the matter. Like some grand mash-up of early Calla and The Wake and Slowdive, with just a hint of Kitchens of Distinction, *The Four Walls* glistens with shoegazer heft, a wall of throbbing guitar sound periodically punctuated by wafts of melody. The flavor of said melodies varies: the pert organ-and-theremin motif of "Never Now" is coy and unctuous like Morr Music's folktronic releases; "Side of the Road" plies melancholia on gentle Madchester themes; and the wispy vocals on "Constellations" veer toward the ethereal pop of early Love And Rockets. Yet no track is more successful than "The Turning Point," where a refashioned "Fool's Gold" break lurches forward with arpeggiated bass and a minacious swarm of layered guitars. Forgive *The Four Walls* for not being more electronic, but Languis clearly has more to share than just beats and digital tones. *Heath K. Hignight*

# MUSH RECORDS



**Clouddead**  
*Fer*

From a land where rhymes reside peacefully along side indie-rock melodies and fey folktronic accents. —Urb



**Her Space Holiday**  
*The Young Machines*

'The Young Machines' is the best thing Her Space Holiday has ever done. —Magnet



**Thavius Beck**  
*Decomposition*

Featuring guest vocals by Cedric Bixler-Cravallo of The Mars Volta, Longevity of Darkleaf, and Subtitle.



**Octavius**  
*Audio Noir*

Top 20 Electronic Albums of 2003. —Tower Records



**The Opus**  
*Breathing Lessons*

The Opus are two of the most brilliant beatmakers working in hip-hop. —All Music Guide



**Omid**  
*Monolith*

Featuring guest vocals by Hymnal, Back 65, Busdriver, 2Mex, Abstract Rude, Spoon (of Iodine), Aesylone, Murs, Luckyiam.F30, and Slug



**Villain Accelerate**  
*Maid of Gold*

A seamless mix of dark, flowing beats with a bevvy of eccentric concrete-ish sonics. —JLR&P



**Listener**  
*Whispermoon*

Simply put, Listener represents fundamental underground rap at its finest. —Relix



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**ROBERT MILES & TRILOK GURTU**

**MILES GURTU**

*Shakti/US/CD*

**TJ REHMI**

**THE WARM CHILL**

*Dharma Moon/US/CD*

World-fusion electronica on labels known for candle-shop background music—before you run screaming to the hills to escape the apparent floaty New Age apparition of these two discs, stay put and hear them out. Dream-house maestro Robert Miles and Indo-jazz percussionist Trilok Gurtu each wield serious compositional chops, making like King Crimson-meets-Squarepusher in spots of *Miles\_Gurtu*. And don't let the title *The Warm Chill* worry you—this album has d&b composer TJ Rehmi lovingly (and relaxingly!) mashing bhanga and breakbeats. On-the-beaten-path Indian influences keep both CDs moving but soothing, and both are miles beyond the dreaded Anglo-meets-Asian congloms of late. *Stacy Meyn*

**MOCEAN WORKER**

**ENTER THE MOWO!**

*MoWo/US/CD*

A lazy listen to Mocean Worker's fourth album might dismiss it as leftover acid-jazz instrumental loops over beats. There's actually much more going on here. Blues structures, guest appearances from David "Fathead" Newman and Bill Frisell, dueling flutes courtesy of Rashaan Roland Kirk, and live playing by Franck Gauthier of Rhinoceros make it clear that MoWo didn't just dash this one off. Though there are some decidedly tepid inclusions—the monotonous "Fatback" and the melodramatic "I'll Take the Woods," to name a few—*Enter the MoWo!* is a deftly textured take on a sound sullied by the efforts of distracted amateurs. *Peter Nicholson*



**MUM**

**SUMMER MAKE GOOD**

*Fat Cat/UK/CD*

The cutest little band on earth returns with its darkest effort to date, an album that trades in the dew-dappled splendor of past outings for moonlit mood music. Much has been made of Mum's environmental approach to recording, and the field recordings strewn throughout this album (whether of whistling wind or creaking clapboards) deftly evoke the lighthouse in which it was recorded. Still, one can't help but think that the Icelandic soundscape is herein reduced to caricature, and a maudlin one at that. The estimation is confirmed by these songs, which seem more like assayed lullabies than fully formed pieces of music. Rockist though this criticism may be, there's an utter lack of tunes here, nothing which allows singer Kristin Anna Valtyisdottir to emerge past the embryonic fairy steez which has become her cloying trademark. Just call this one a nautical disaster. *Martin Turenne*

**MURS**

**MURS 3:16: THE 9TH EDITION**

*Def Jux/US/CD*

2004 is the year of perfect hip-hop pairings. First, MF Doom and Madlib find their pre-destined match with Madvillain, and now Murs—the most promising rapper to emerge from the West Coast in years—meets Little Brother's 9th Wonder, a producer who can provide him with musical empathy and an album's worth of dynamic, soulful, timeless beats. Murs is still hungry, but a tad more in control on *Murs 3:16*, and the result is a must-own album full of visceral, situational rap. From "The Rain"’s effortless reconciliation of Murs' sensitive side to "And This If For"’s frank discussion of the black and white divide, this is essential stuff. *Jamie Collinson*

**NEULANDER**

**SMOKE + FIRE**

*Disko B/GER/CD*

Although they're based in New York, Neulander (Korinna Knoll and Adam Peters) sounds about as German as they come. Their stark, linear electro-pop is seemingly devoid of emotion, yet chock-full of computer-crafted social despair. Digging deeper, *Smoke + Fire* eventually proves itself to be vibrantly human. Knoll's unsure, clipped vocals are remarkably charming in an early Annie Lennox kind of way, and the group's shirt-sleeve admiration of Human League and Pet Shop Boys ("Sex, God + Money" is a doppel-ganger of "Opportunities [Let's Make Lots of Money]") pushes them beyond the toss-away faddishness of Berliniamsburg and related electro revival opportunists. *Smoke + Fire* is sing-along good. *Heath K. Hignight*



**NOSTALGIA 77**

**SONGS FOR MY FUNERAL**

*Tru Thoughts/UK/CD*

Why anybody would feel the urge to write music to be played following his or her demise is beyond me. Despite the morbid premise of this collection, though, *Songs For My Funeral* contains some jovially sparkling jazz-hoppers.

"Rain Walk" sees regal strings dominate proceedings, as a pouting bass and abrupt keys cater to their every need. "Metamorphosis" lets a crazy, jazzed-up trumpet run amok alongside drummed-up percussion; and "The Beginning" surprisingly ends proceedings, with whooping vocal shouts, tooting bugles and conversational scratches. A bizarre but appealing record that sometimes approaches deathly good. *Jon Freer*

**THE OPUS**

**BREATHING LESSONS**

*Mush/US/CD*

The Opus's debut, 2002's *First Contact 001*, hinted at the underground hip-hop duo's weird approach, but it still seemed too indebted to DJs Premier and Shadow. On *Breathing Lessons*, Chicago's Mr. Echoes and the Isle Of Weight instantly submerge you in their mysterious, subterranean world with a down-pitched, seesawing sitar loop, trippy Moog emissions and martial-funk beats. Next level duly achieved, the Opus continues to flaunt their genius for bizarre samples, elevating hip-hop into a dystopian sci-fi future that sounds oddly thrilling. Supernaturally dark, warped and peculiarly funky, *Breathing Lessons* furthers hip-hop's ongoing and welcome psychedelic renovation. *Dave Segal*



**AUGUSTUS PABLO**

**KING TUBBYS MEETS ROCKERS UPTOWN**

*Shanachie/US/CD*

**WAILING SOULS**

**AT CHANNEL ONE**

*Pressure Sounds/UK/CD*

Righteous as it is, the plight of the roots aficionado is encumbered by many a warped Jamaican vinyl pressing. This makes Shanachie's loving reissue of *Rockers*, arguably the quint-essential dub album, so glorious. Just to hear the towering rhythm and bass of the title track the way it's meant to sound is enough to inspire lifelong devotion. Meanwhile, *At Channel One*, a collection of "7s, 12s and versions" presents the Wailing Souls in all their vocal and dubbed glory. Up there with the Congos as one of the finest vocal groups from the late '70s, this will surely stand as one of the finest roots reissues this year. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

**PAPA M**

**HOLE OF BURNING ALMS**

*Drag City/US/CD*

A compilation of vinyl 12-inch releases, limited CD singles and unreleased tracks, Papa M's *Hole of Burning Alms* has been both a feat and a journey for musician David Pajo to record and produce. His trademark lo-fi folk stylings carry listeners through a landscape of sleepy melodies, liquid rhythms and pure guitar sounds that resonate so clearly and precisely you may ask yourself if they're for real. Papa M has mastered his guitar, allowing it to create songs that neither trash nor rock, but unfold into dark bedtime stories. *Julia Chan*



**RAMMELLZEE**

**BI-CONICALS OF THE RAMMELLZEE**

*Gomma/GER/CD*

Sometimes the album art says it all: some growling homeboy in a Beijing Opera mask, rainbow ski boots, with what appears to be a travel version of Connect Four dangling from his belt and, in the mirror, his opposite reflection. I don't know quite how it's happened, but *Bi-Conicals...* sounds *exactly* like iconic hip-hopper Rammellzee *looks*—not quite insane, not quite clown. This album is full of gothic videogame hip-hop tunnel-scavengers that aren't quite demented enough to be truly fun, yet crazy enough as to be totally confusing to listen to. *Selena Hsu*

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**RANDOM FACTOR**

**CONVERGENCE**  
20:20 Vision/UK/CD

Electro master Carl Finlow's latest album marks the 100th release for well-respected UK house imprint 20:20 Vision, and what a glimmering, tongue-in-cheek celebration it is. *Convergence* is less hands-in-the-air than hands-down-your-pants, full of tronic funk and pop lock that gets boiled down to a restrained liquid latex groove. "After The Tone" is gorgeous, burbling, early morning 4/4, for when everyone but you and your lover has left the floor. "Convergence" plays like an elegy for *Construction Time Again*-era Depeche Mode, full of somber New Wave vocals and minor-key synths, but Finlow also finds time for happier numbers like the sashaying and shanté-ing "Move On." Delicious computer house for Luomo fans and lithe dancefloor mavens. *Vivian Host*

**ROMANOWSKI**

**STEADY ROCKING (INNA JAMAICAN STYLEE)**

*Future Primitive/US/CD*

San Francisco renaissance man Romanowski parlays a love of dub and roots reggae into a tasty little nine-tracker of sexy breaks that's sure to occupy a spot in the DJ box of hip-hop and downtempo party rockers throughout the Bay and beyond. Standouts are the steady ska lode of "Speaking Of" (including a separate, deliciously snappy, dub version) and the flute-happy downtown Jamaica funk of "Romjack Steady," sure to put a swing in your step and a crease in your tam. *John Dark*



**SLUTA LETA**  
SEMI PETERSON

*Mego/AUS/CD*

Sluta Leta used to be Swedes Bengt Lijestad and Jonas Bergkvist; now the group consists of Andi Pieper and Ramon Bauer and Gerhard Potuznik of Austrian laptop deviants General Magic. The first incarnation of Sluta Leta produced abstract funk for Chocolate Industries and Cheap, and I don't know why established producers would assume another group's identity. But I'm glad these Central Europeans (powered by exceptional drummer ddkern) have shape-shifted, for on *Semi Peterson* they add Dadaist convolutions to old warhorses like electro-pop and funk. Along with recent works by Tujiko Noriko and Fritz Ostermayer, *Semi Peterson* continues Mego's detour into more song-based yet defiantly original electronica. *Dave Segal*

**THE SOUND PROVIDERS**

**AN EVENING WITH THE SOUND PROVIDERS**

*ABB/US/CD*

The Sound Providers' style is "jazz combo with drum programming." Utilizing dusty horn and piano loops as the backdrop, the Providers set a hip-hop jazz club vibe that's certainly a winner. Their Achilles heel is that they fall a little too in love with their loops, meaning several instrumental tracks stagnate, and don't take the formula any further. Nevertheless, some quality vocalists, including Asheru,

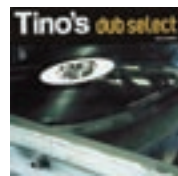
Ken Boogaloo, Yeshua, Phonte and Pooh of Little Brother, propel their cuts ahead nicely, and there isn't a wack beat to be had here. *Pete Babb*



**JASON SPARKS**  
HEROES AND VILLAINS

*Botchit & Scarper/UK/CD*

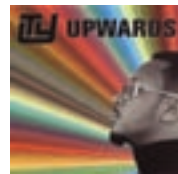
Having quickly become one of the standout stars at Botchit, Jason Sparks delivers a heavy-duty breakbeat album that sets him apart from the crowd. While there's a natural element of dancefloor at the core, don't expect a traditional nu-skoool take on beats and bass; Sparks draws upon an assortment of influences that range from Portishead to Miles Davis, with a little My Bloody Valentine thrown in for good measure. *Heroes and Villains* creates an easy space to get lost in—Jason entrances with exotic blues and jazz samples while cinematic atmospheres and sci-fi details keep things on the dark side. Very necessary. *Chris Muniz*



**TINO CORP**  
TINO'S DUB SELECTS

*Quatermass/BEL/CD*

When not freaking the beat with Meat Beat Manifesto, Jack Dangers is continuing his collaborations with Ben Stokes and creating some of the best technical dub out there. With *Dub Selects*, Tino Corp lends some tracks from *Tino's Breaks Volume 5*, *Tino's Breaks Volume 6* and *Halloween Dub* to Belgium's Quatermass Records. If you like the sampling frenzy of MBM's records and the quirky-to-spooky dub of the Scientist (particularly *Scientist Rids The Evil Curse*), you'll dig this. And combining influences—from the *Charlie's Angels* xylophone hook to dialogue from the film *Rockers*—Tino proves to be a true selector. *Daniel Sivek*



**TY**  
UPWARDS

*Big Dada/UK/CD*

Throw out your "UK rap" or "conscious" qualifiers—Ty comes correct with hip-hop that's built to last, regardless of where it was made. On his second full-length, Ty manhandles the mic, but also steps behind the board with production partner Drew, turning out bouncy, infectious tracks that recall the genre's more freeform street party roots. With its Afro-beat-inclusive flavors (including a little help from Fela's drummer Tony Allen) and songs purpose-built for broken-beat dancefloors ("Wait A Minute" and "Groovement"), *Upwards* is at once classic and groundbreaking. *Peter Nicholson*

**VAST AIRE**

**LOOK MOM...NO HANDS**  
*Chocolate Industries/US/CD*

Are they or aren't they? No new Cannibal Ox album yet, but here's Vast Aire's solo project, with Vast bouncing off RDJ2's soul cuts, Ayatollah's electro-rockers and Madlib's herky-jerky sampler jazz. An energized Vast wades right in, sprinkling references to his infamous *Cold Vein* rhymes among new punchlines, and ripping the system on "Poverty Lane 16128" ("I think this whole system's corrupt/They'd rather fly into space than fill an empty cup"). Still, we miss Vordul Megliah like a phantom limb, and when he shows up on the closing track, the duo is butter like Captain and Tennille. *Rob Geary*

**VISIONARIES**

**PANGAEA**

*Up Above/US/CD*

Rap crew the Visionaries—which consists of LMNO, Key Kool, 2Mex, Zen, Dannu and DJ Rhettmatic—remind me a lot of early incarnations of the Black Eyed Peas and Jurassic 5. They're from LA, they're multiracial, and they lay down uplifting, at times didactic lyrics over swiny, quite classic-sounding hip-hop beats—here provided by guest producers like Beat Junkie J-Rocc to Dilated Peoples' Evidence and Shape Shifters' Life Rexall. Suffice to say, if you like your breaks funk-derived and your rhymes conscious, you'll probably be feeling this. I, for one, am gonna go pop on that 50 Cent. *Tyra Bangs*

**DAMON WILD**

**DOWNTOWN WORLDS**

*Kanzleramt/GER/CD*

Seasoned New York techno vet Damon Wild built his bulletproof underground rep with banging acid techno for heads into Beltram, Stoll and their ilk. With *Downtown Worlds*, Wild refines some of the abrasiveness out of it while easing the pressure off the gas pedal. Far from smoothing out his tracks, these changes serve him well. Now Wild's music's more about finesse than velocity. Like Surgeon and Marco Bailey, Wild transplants primal African and Asian elements into relentlessly propulsive, hypnotic techno frameworks. *Downtown Worlds* is a potent fusion of "tribal" and "machine" elements—a combo many have tried to master, but few as wildly. *Dave Segal*

**Jon Delerious**



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Putsch '79

**PUTSCH '79 PUTSCH** *Clone/NETH/CD*

From the darkest reaches of the earth, Finnish kids Sami Liuski (Bangkok Impact) and Pauli Jylhäkangas are perfecting a warm blend of shuffly New York disco and early-'80s Detroit sounds. Combining analog synths and live guitar with campy dancefloor fun, the pair creates music that is consistently good, from their resolutely danceable tracks to quirky midtempo ones. But none stands out like the driving opener "1300" and its antecedent, "Asian Girls." The latter features bouncing bass and feel-good strings sashaying across the floor like so much jiggy choreography to the breathy chorus of "Asian girrrls... Chinese loverrr..." Not to be missed. *Liz Cordingley*

**Ingrooves presents: THE BIG TURN ON**

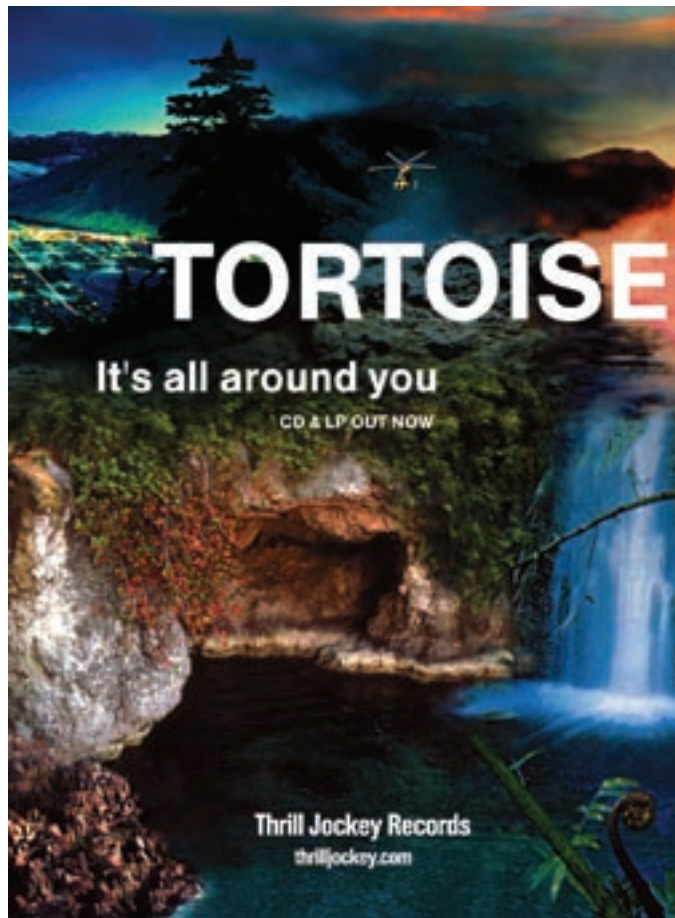
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Spring 2004

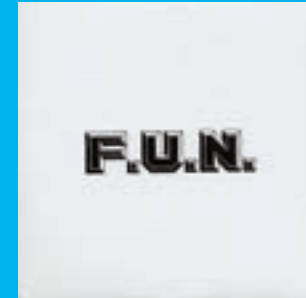
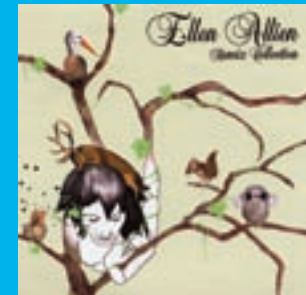
zero g sounds

- Local Fields Length Scales**  
An emotive revamp of the tech-house template
- Triton Green**  
Throbbing techno dusted with dub textures
- Smartyants Soup**  
Boston-not-Köln minimal techno
- Out Now**  
**Gys Art D'Echo**  
Inventively dubbed-out heir to the Basic Channel school of techno. "a hypnotic invitation. Let's just say 'chill and thrill' because that's what this record does." *Ear Pollution*

**Coming Soon**  
Gys Subset, Echo and Lon Raygun The Sound Of Words  
Roman Stange Camouflage  
Localfields Flutter EP

Distribution: Crosstalk | Watts | Syntax | CTD | Southern | Forced Exposure

Zero G Sounds <http://www.zerogsounds.com>, [info@zerogsounds.com](mailto:info@zerogsounds.com)  
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DJ Koze

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**DJ KOZE: ALL PEOPLE IS MY FRIENDS** Kompakt/GER/CD  
**ELLEN ALLIEN: REMIX COLLECTION** BPitch Control/GER/CD  
**FAMOUS WHEN DEAD 3** Playhouse/GER/CD  
**F.U.N.** Four Music/GER/CD

San Francisco's BPM Records keeps many of its best records in a box labeled "Weird-Ass German Shit." Humor aside, the name's a bit misleading. While German dance music has always been tagged for its screwiness and slagged for *Sprockets*-like pretension, the country's given birth to a wide range of dance music that's dead funky—and wildly diverse. Of course, that may not be news to fans of any of the labels or artists represented here—each one hails from a different scene, and each one stakes out a different idea of German electronic music. Taken together, these four compilations offer an intriguing cross-section of German electronica's distinct camps and where they overlap.

Surprisingly, the label best known for crafting a distinct sound veers furthest from its core competency. On his mix for Cologne's canonical Kompakt label, DJ Koze plays fast and loose with our expectations, laying down no fewer than four folksy intro tracks—including, bafflingly, the Langely Schools Project's grade-school choral version of "The Long and Winding Road." Eventually, he gets to the meat of the mix, delivering the kind of thump and grind that we've come to expect from Kompakt. Dropping tracks from Jackmate, Thomas Brinkmann and Ricardo Villalobos, Koze digs deep into German techno's thumping, clicking mechanical heart.

A track from Koze's International Pony project leads off Playhouse's

*Famous When Dead 3*, suggesting the kind of overlaps at play in the German scene. Playhouse, based in Offenbach am Main and a sister label to Ongaku and Klang Elektronik, has always been one of Germany's more catholic dance labels, and its third *FWD* collection gracefully details its philosophy of house music by embracing jacking new wave from Rework, loony post-disco from Isolée, and Villalobos's ubiquitous "Easy Lee." For Playhouse, house music has always been the mothership, and each track here acts as a shuttle to take the listener home to the source, albeit via strange, elliptical orbits.

Meanwhile, in Berlin, two camps seem to have arrived at an amicable face-off. Ellen Allien explains the modus operandi of her Bpitch Control operation with a collection of her remixes for artists like Apparat, Barbara Morgenstern, and even Gold Chains. On each one, Allien moves like a figure in a darkened bunker, feeling her way along the pocked wall separating techno from the corrosive elements of a more experimental strain, fingers groping for the breach in the barrier and littering the ground with caulk and crumbled concrete. But Berlin's Four Music has discovered another underground—this one a tunnel linking Berlin and Williamsburg. The tracks on *F.U.N.* would all sound right at home on DFA's sound system, from the grimy funk of Munk's "Bionik Boogie! Bitch" to the faux-wave freestyle of Headman's "Freedom Drums." Even here, Tiefschwarz's stomping "Blow" wouldn't be out of place on one of Kompakt's *Speicher* singles. It's low-slung, funky and relentlessly acidic, and it wraps up Germany's everything-at-once musical possibilities like a *ringstrasse*. *Philip Sherburne*



Boris Dlugosch

**BIONIC BREAKS: COMPILED BY BORIS DLUGOSCH** *Kontor/GER/CD*

If *Bionic Breaks* was a live set, it might seem a bit cold and clinical. But German DJ Boris Dlugosch didn't use a traditional turntable/mixer set-up to compile these two discs—he employed Ableton Live software. The result is a crucial history lesson that occasionally becomes a dynamic dancefloor bomb. From the goth bump 'n' grind of Human League's "Being Boiled" to the robotic freestyle of Freez's "Pop Goes My Love" to the insistent pulse of Hashim's classic "Al-Naafiysh," *Bionic Breaks* counts among its 41 tracks some of the most essential proto-techno masterpieces ever. These get sutured together with modern day anthems like Metro Area's "Miura" and the Chicken Lips remix of Playgroup's "Make It Happen," and pretty soon you've ingested enough grinding synthetic funk to keep you poplocking through the next century. *Tyra Bangs*

**THE BEAT GENERATION**

*BBE/UK/CD*  
The hip-hop tracks that open this compilation are all solid, but it's the second half's soul and funk that make *The Beat Generation* shine. Selections by luminaries DJ Jazzy Jeff, Will. I.Am and Pete Rock are worth a listen, but don't find these classic artists at their best. In contrast, tracks like "Hummin'" by Marley Marl and featuring Roy Ayers, and the ultra-funked "Superstar" by King Britt stay with you long after the disc has stopped spinning. The closing track, a selection from Allen Ginsberg, caps off this reminder of what the beat can mean in different hands. *Luciana Lopez*

**BREAK REFORM**

*New Perspectives*  
*Abstract Blue/UK/CD*  
Break Reform showed us the humanity of raw UK street soul with their debut LP, *Fractures*. *New Perspectives* lovingly revisits cuts from that collection, while offering up previously unavailable dubs and remixes. "What Do You Do" philosophizes over what should be gotten out of life, while angular, but relaxed, beats tussle with calming keys. Meanwhile, Nwachukwu's remix of "When It Came" is a startling and bold overhaul, with fizzing synths, passionate keys and vocals that cry out for answers. Although not as essential as *Fractures*, this collection should still be high up on the shopping list for any lover of untamed emotion. *Jon Freer*

**DJ DREZ: THE CAPTURE OF SOUND**  
*Battle Axe/US/CD*

If you liked Madlib's *Shades of Blue* and recent releases from Variable Unit, you'll probably be feeling DJ Drez's latest: while *The Capture of Sound* is no *Bitches Brew*, it beats the hell out of your average lounge-music-with-a-4/4-beat. Apart from Drez's smoky instrumentals, the album's strength is that it highlights West Coast underground standard-bearers. Aceyalone pounds it on "Last Show," Medusa's "Funk Infected" will convert the uninitiated and Dr. Oop's flows are damn sexy on "The Prescription." *Rachel Swan*

**EMBEDDED JOINTS**

*Embedded/US/CD*  
Folks who fell in love with Dizzee Rascal last year will love *Embedded Joints*—chock full of solid nerd/crackhead production, this new compilation is a veritable tryst between beloved boom-bap and Prefuse 73-esque stylings. Sonic quality aside, *Embedded* is worth buying for the cast of MCs alone: Aceyalone ("Check My Willz") and Breeze Evah ("Communication") kick down smart battle rhymes, and Atoms Family ("Adversity Struck") pops in with a few potty-mouthed zingers—in Cockney accents, no less. *Rachel Swan*

**ENNIO MORRICONE REMIXES VOL. 2**  
*Compost/GER/CD*

Ennio Morricone has to be one of the most recognizable film composers of all time. To celebrate his 75th birthday, the snazzy folks at Compost have done more than just rehash *The Good, The Bad And The Ugly*. The second of their Morricone tribute compilations doesn't just contain tracks with the obligatory sampling of his original scores. Each effort—whether its Domu's nu-jazz reconstruction, Tom Middleton's spacey fare, or Swell Session's lush downtempo—constructs new cinematic manifestos, keeping the quality of the source material while providing new inspiration for the dancefloor, your bed, or your head. *Daniel Siwek*

**EXCLUSIVE COLLECTION: MIXED BY DJ RHETT MATE**  
*Up Above/US/CD*

Now that DJ mixtapes are a sanctioned format, they've become tricky. Previously, track selection was left up to the DJ. Nowadays, the labor of getting song-use permission comes heavily into play. As a showcase for Rhettmatic's DJ skills, this mix is great. As a smorgasbord of songs, it's less successful. There are some tight tracks by the Beatnuts and Tony Touch, but other cuts are middling fare, and almost all of them are widely available. This isn't a bad mix, but it's not essential listening. *Pete Babb*

**FAVELA CHIC POSTONOVE VOL. 3**  
*Milan/FR/CD*

Unlike the Brazilian-derived lounge that's been popular for a minute, this album is the straight dope, encompassing a broad range of music from Brazil. From "Bananeira," a song that's been recorded by a list of artists (here performed by Emilio Santiago) to a version of "Spinning Wheel" in Portuguese (by Raulzinho of Impacto 8) to hip-hop tracks like "Hip Hop Não Para" by Ginger Ale vs. Z'África Brasil, the third installment of *Favela Chic* cuts a well-chosen, head-nodding swath through Brazil's current music scene. *Luciana Lopez*

**FIVE YEARS OF POKER FLAT RECORDINGS**  
*Poker Flat/US/CD*

If the outdated opposition between dancefloor rapture and labcoat intellectualism still exists among clubgoers and bedroom critics, Poker Flat has gleefully ignored such a polarity. As Martini Bros, Phonogenic, Hakan Lidbo and owner Steve Bug testify here, the label has perfected a brand of minimal tech-house that's not afraid to work up a crafty sweat, one that could obliterate house music segregation in one fell swoop. About time. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

**HEAR YOU SOON: PART ONE**  
*Blue Bell/US/CD*

Here's a pretty little bag of jellybean electronics from Blue Bell, a new label spun off from Darla Records. The 17 tracks of perky micro-pop collected here range from the softly orange glow of Marumari's "Casium" to Hausmeister's dorky-cute bop, "Ruben," from the chimes of "Good Morning, Amanda" to Greg Davis's tangled guitar and harmonics. *Hear* is sweet, but some of the songs seem frustratingly bite-sized, blurry around the edges, and not quite cohesive in form. Tycho's "Dream As Memory," for example, starts out with a wonderfully rounded sheen, but stays small and stops short. *Hear You Soon* contains tantalizing tastes here that'll make you greedy for more. *Selena Hsu*

**HORIZONS: MARQUES WYATT**  
*Om/US/CD*

*Horizons* is a pleasant surprise: an outstanding mix of soulful house with a range and intensity that grabbed me instantly. Taking off with the gospel fervor of "You Gotta Believe" by Intense & Voices of 6th Ave., Wyatt builds up with classy vocal numbers from Kathy Brown and Barbara Mendes before dropping out into trackier cuts like "Slangin'," featuring E-Man's outstanding scat. What really makes the mix is Wyatt's excursion into Brazilian and Latin territory, particularly Osunlade's sublime "Same Thing?" featuring Maiya James. Definitely not the usual deep-house drudgery. *Peter Nicholson*

**DJ SPOOKY THAT SUBLIMINAL KID: RHYTHM SCIENCE**  
*Sub Rosa/BEL/CD*

Sub Rosa commissioned a DJ who knows the meaning of "de-territorialization" and "pan-humanism" to remix tracks from its catalog of the sort of noisicians who often bandy such terms about. *Rhythm Science* is Spooky's usual "illbient" trip through the incense-choked back alleys and warehouses of Babylon, but this time it stars greats like Bill Laswell, Scanner and Claude Debussy. Sub Rosa's best asset is its spoken-word collection of famed literary outlaws, but Spooky mostly uses them as fodder on top of breaks; the hopeful, but fudged, pairing of Oval with James Joyce is unforgivable. *Rhythm* is an admirable concept, but set to leave listeners feeling shortchanged. *Cameron Macdonald*



**THE INCREDIBLE MELTING MAN: A YEAR IN REVIEW**  
*2Ways + A Revolution/CAN/CD*

What a lovely way to make the neighbors complain! With bass that ranges from large and pooling, like on DJ Scissorkicks's remix "Red Skull," to the contained, cascading throb of Subtropic's "Black Velvet," this breaks comp plays like a primer on the versatility of low-end. Remixes and tracks by Hatiras, the Phat Conductor and Myagi punched up with propulsive breakbeats make for an energetic ride. Did I mention it comes with an 11-track bonus disc mixed by D-monic? True. *Melissa Wheeler*

**JAMES LAVELLE: ROMANIA**  
*Global Underground/UK/2xCD*

Taking time off from his latest U.N.K.L.E. project with partner Richard File, James Lavelle returns to the GU series with a diverse follow-up to 2002's *Barcelona* mix project. Taking inspiration from Bucharest this time around, the Mo' Wax label boss trips through an eclectic landscape of breakbeat, techno and trip-hop atmospheres courtesy of artists like Queens of the Stone Age, Derrick Carter, DJ Shadow, Richie Hawtin and Chemical Brothers. While the programming may frustrate the casual listener—who is doubtlessly expecting something with "progressive" in the title—fans of Lavelle will find themselves right at home. *Chris Muniz*

**MUSIC IS BETTER VOLUME ONE: MANCHESTER VS. HELSINKI**  
*Mate/UK/CD*

The first full-length release on Manchester's Mate Recordings marks a musical alliance between English and Finnish cities that may appear strange on paper, but makes perfect sense musically—both towns being famous for nonconformist musical innovation, groundbreaking club nights and freezing cold weather. *Music Is Better Volume One* champions such oddball electro proponents as Boys of Scandinavia, Caution! Horses and Alcohol—artists who favor songwriting over breaks and bleeps. The resulting *nouveau* disco jams should appeal equally to punk-funkers, purists and fans of the Smiths. *Dave Stenton*

**READ: INTERPRETING BJÖRK**  
*Hush/US/CD*

At one point Hush realized how insane it would be to release a Björk tribute album and shelved this whole project. Turns out it's not the disastrous beast it was feared to be. Though you can't take the Björk out of Björk, and acoustic covers of electronic music always seem to be lacking something, Kaitlyn Ni Donovan's "The Hunter" captures the spirit of that song well; likewise Roots of Orchis's "Possibly Maybe," Death Cab crooner Ben Gibbard's "Joga" and fellow Northwesterner Bobby Birdman's "Unravel." A testament to Björk's enduring songwriting and widespread popularity, these covers are more compliments than affronts. *Liz Cordingley*

**RECEIVING DATA—AH, IT'S COMING**

*Sender/GER/CD*  
Covering a great deal of ground, *Receiving Data* is an enlightening selection of neuro-muscular stimulation from one of Germany's leading techno lights. "After Shock" marks the return of dance music veteran Baby Ford, who battles valiantly through an outer space shot through with synths and bass tremors. Sten's "Faces" sounds like the calls of a lost astronaut, with an infectious acidic bassline playing against sharpened synths and clockwork keys that back bold sci-fi strings. Elsewhere, K. Lakizz & Trike contribute "Suppress," a somber affair where shoe-gazing bass meets fragile percussion. This one's up there with the likes of Tresor and friends. *Jon Freer*

**SPIRE: ORGAN WORKS PAST PRESENT & FUTURE**  
*Touch/UK/CD*



If the organ is most often associated with Gothic environs and baroque Christian arrangements, Touch has done a superb job at getting to the, erm, spirit of the instrument. Losing gratuitous ornamentation, the likes of Philip Jeck, Fennesz (with Sparklehorse's Scott Minor), Oren Ambarchi and Biosphere alternate between towering, overblown drones and celestial glissandos. And yet, despite losing such overt religious trappings, the instrument still can't help but suggest the all-powerful. Spire's well named, then. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

**STATION**  
*AI/UK/CD*

2003 was a big year for little AI records, as they released a string of luminous twelve-inches and stunning compilations, and eBay fever developed for their scant early releases. It was all for good reason—their exceedingly good electro-infused, crystalline IDM is delivered with the quality and visual distinction of vintage Warp. Staunchly devoted to developing and highlighting new talent, *Station* proves 2004 to be an even more auspicious year for this London lot. Nary a dull moment spread across these 16 tracks; familiarize yourself with Yellowtone, Michael Manning, Praveen and Normal, and ignore at your own risk. *Brian Paul*



**U.S. POP LIFE VOL. 17: ECLECTIC "THE ADDING MACHINE!"**  
**U.S. POP LIFE VOL. 18: GRAPHIC MYSTERY**  
*Contact/US-JPN/CD*

The *U.S. Pop Life* series is designed to introduce the Japanese to the best independent and experimental music coming out of North America, but volumes 17 and 18 contain a fair amount of artists that could be considered obscure even by native standards. Vol. 17 dedicates itself mainly to the punk dance underground, with explosive numbers by Washington

D.C.'s Measles Mumps Rubella, San Francisco's Coachwhips and Kansas City's Ssion. Vol. 18 is no less gripping, even as it does a 180 into electronic beep-and-squelch territory. Stars as Eyes, Languis and a host of Chicago artists—K-Rad, Salvo Beta, The Timeout Drawer—represent with leftfield techno numbers that are full of personality. *Vivian Host*

**VIBES AFTER VIBES: RED LIGHT CITY**  
**VIBES AFTER VIBES: LETS RIDE**  
**VIBES AFTER VIBES: DIAMOND VOLUME III**

*John Shop/US/CD*  
These three CDs from the *Vibes After Vibes* series prove that New York's John Shop probably has the right to a Greensleeves riddim album in the near future. The Let's Ride riddim, produced by Teethimus, blasts away with stadium-rock-size drums, string stabs and acid bass, leaving plenty of space for aggressive flows from Sizzla and Baby Wayne. Charlemagne and Yami Bolo drop the Red Light City riddim, an echoing dub rocker adorned with one-finger synth and a steel drumroll. Sami Dread rolls a Horace Andy-like vibrato over the beat, while Capleton unleashes a righteous grow. *Diamond Volume III* mixes selections from several John Shop rhythm discs into an agreeable overview. *Rob Geary*



**WAVETEC ONE: THE MILES FROM MARS MIX**  
*WaveTec/US/CD*

This mix by Rob Rives of Floppy Sounds is serious business. Darker, techier and more single-minded than standard Wave fare, the inaugural release on their WaveTec imprint focuses solely on the groove. The relentless drums and metronome basslines get a bit numbing on tracks like Phantom Power's "Panawave 2" and the D/Malicious's progressively predictable "Loup-Garou," but Rives saves the day by injecting just a touch of funk from Matty Heilbronn and Boyd Jarvis. The final cut, Carl Craig's remix of Rives's own "Entertainment," shows the rich possibilities inherent in these sounds—sadly, many of the other songs don't measure up. *Peter Nicholson*

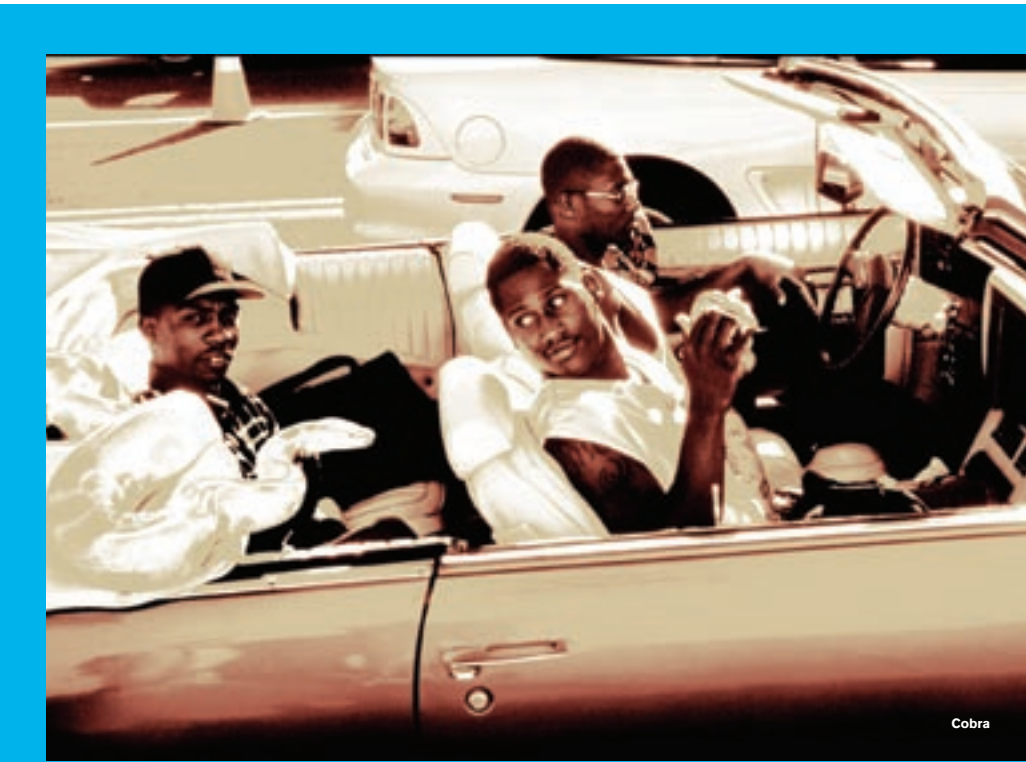


**WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE?**  
*Klangkrieg/GER/CD*

The 15 tracks on this album derive out of an intro, a way-too-long snippet announcing a fictitious contest to compose music for a new game show. The resulting tracks—contributed by Panacea, Jayrope and Echokrank, among others—sound like the unfortunate result of the popularization of home studios. They're largely unimaginative and most of them sample the phrase "who wants to be a millionaire," creating a crop of pretentious pseudo-statements on money and entertainment. You probably know a 12-year-old who can do better. *Luciana Lopez*

**DETROIT SOUL** *Unisex/UK/CD*

Detroit's last major musical upheaval happened in the '80s, as techno originators Derrick May, Juan Atkins and crew expressed soul through melodic subtleties, which reacted with the machine-driven elements of their music. Today, there's a new soul revolution afoot in Detroit, with artists delivering startling instrumental tracks and riveting falsetto cuts that emotionally nod towards the city's musical forebears—think Smokey, Marvin and '60s Motown. *The Detroit Soul* compilation represents the best of this city's emerging raw talent. Anita Wright, one of only a few female vocalists on the disc, delivers "Untitled," a delicious ode to the heart-warming feeling of being in love. Athletic Mic League's "The Loveliest" is a gorgeous half-spoken/half-rapped number dominated by optimistic brass hooks, while Ayro's "Burning Brightly" further stokes the fire with Rhodes keys, fluid synths and vocals that just won't let go. From Cobra to Dwele to the Jaylib collaboration, *Detroit Soul* makes no missteps in marking the new wave of young Motor City soul. *Jon Freer*



Cobra

HOUSE GUEST REVIEWS: LANCE DESARDI

Maybe it's something in the barbeque, but the city of Dallas has rolled out some choice house producers, including JT Donaldson, Jamie Thinnies and your boy Lance DeSardi. DeSardi—who also records as Lance Nuance and Land Shark—started out as an industrial music head in the early '90s before falling under the spell of the thump. His hook-up with the Hazy Daze Collective led to the launch of the minimally oriented Fair Park label. After Donaldson showed him the studio ropes, DeSardi started an impressive discography, with tracks released on labels like Plush, Choice Cuts, Chez Music and Siesta. Now based on the West Coast, DeSardi's rolled with the Panhandle and Seasons Records crews and works with Donaldson as



The Land Shark bares themeth: Lance DeSardi

Undercover Agency. His recent tunes as Land Shark on Coco Machete have made major waves, and with his ultra-sharp remixes of KC Flightt's "She's Sexxy" and the Land Shark album on tap, the man hasn't stopped, except to let us know what's buzzin' the bins. Ron Nachmann

www.seasonsrecordings.com, www.panhandlerecords.com

3RD FACE CANTO DELLA LIBERTA Classic/US/12

Another obscure classic unearthed by who else but Classic. I'd been looking for the original pressing of this for well over a year when this little jewel showed up on my doorstep. It's basically a tribal beat-down, with a cut-up chant that screws with your head. Throw in the Rob Mello mix for added bleep-love, and this one truly is, well, classic. LD

J.T. DONALDSON ALBUM SAMPLER Gallery/US/12

This is a four-tracker from Tilla's upcoming album on Gallery. It's got a little bit of everything: a couple of nice vocal songs, a tech-y joint, and a really cool cover of a John Coltrane tune. This is only part of the heat the album's gonna bring, and I'm not just saying that because I want to watch his new TV. LD

MANHEAD B.S.W.D. Output/US/12

I've been told this is a cover of a Killing Joke song, which would make sense because it rocks! It has a rock sensibility about it, but still keeps the discopogo-funk thing happening. The vocal is reminiscent of Bauhaus or Joy Division, with a really well-produced backing track. Output's pretty much on fire right now. LD

BLAKKAT & ONIONZ PRESENT EAST RIVER RITUALS AFFIRMATION BLAKKAT FEAT. ASWAN CAME 2 ME Shaboom/UK/12

Blackpool, UK housemeister Mark "Blakkat" Bell has been at it for a good decade or more, and it's good to see him still cranking away on his Shaboom label. "Affirmation" finds the man on smooth, airy vocals backed by a solid rhythm, his man Onionz's percussion and string stabs by Paul Birchall. For the distinguished "Came 2 Me," homeboy backs off the mic to serve up a tech-bossa-lounge rhythm over which golden-throated Aswan croons some elegant seduction. You go, Blak. Ron Nachmann

GARTH PRESENTS REVOLUTIONS IN SOUND VOL. 1 & 2 Grayhound/US/12

West Coast pioneer DJ Garth tosses out a pair of vinyl bits shot off from his recently released retrospective compilation Revolutions in Sound. Volume one offers a real treat on the a-side, Community Recordings' conga- and timbale-infested "Lifted Soul," while the flip finds Dano's dubby West Coast-style rub of the shuffling jam "EZ Rider." Volume two brings a repress of a Jenö remix of Garth's soaring "Out With the Tide," while the flip offers Rasoul's off-kilter "Transitions" and a lost, spare gem by Croatian producer Ambusher. Ron Nachmann

METTA AND JT LOVE KOOBLA CUTS EP Flip-Flip/UK/12

Jackin', simple and stripped-down is how it comes from these two top-notch Brit producers on this four-cut slab. From the scathing "Cold Brew" to the warmly chorded "Someone Else Is In My Edit" and the bawpy keyboard touches on "Bump Me," this one's all about tight grooves balanced between charged-up and laidback. Full up. Ron Nachmann

MORTEN CARGO & AT EASE/HENRIK SCHWARZ FAREWELL CAUSALITY/JIMIS Diamonds & Pearls/GER/12

Berlin distributor Diamonds & Pearls launches their label with this split single that captures the freaky spirit that infused the first wave of Chicago house in the Ron Hardy age. Morten Cargo and At Ease come up with warbly chords, smart hand claps and a plucky bassline over a thumping beat that recalls Mr. Fingers. Good, moody, freeform shit. On the flip's "Jimis," Henrik Schwarz rolls with a compelling and occasionally noisy synth-stabbed groove that seems lush in its minimalism. Walker Lindh

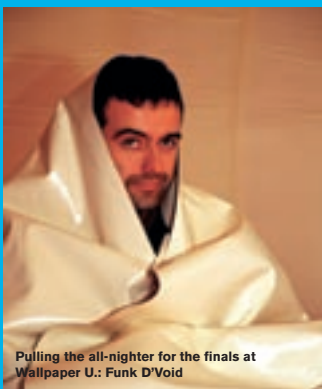
ROSS COUCH THE DEEP END MINDPRINT/DANO QUICKIE/IT'S MY HOUSE! Red Melon/US/12

San Fran label Red Melon brings more peak-time tech-house flavor to the masses. Ross Couch's EP finds him proffering rhythms that thump, chords that chime and whoosh, and satisfying melodies all around. Check the omph-filled chants on "Hearts and Minds" or the blurring epic chug that is the b-side title track. Meanwhile, Mindprint brings niftily toned percussion and a relentless bassline to his dub-tinged "Quickie" on his side of a split with Dano, who hands over an old-school techno-flavored property claim. Well done. Ron Nachmann

SOUL CONNECTION FEAT. LORENZO TYLER IT'S REAL Nu Faze/US/12

Twenty-year Noo Yawk vet Romain brings the serious soul on the sixth release for his Nu Faze imprint. Like the best underground shit, this one's about big sounds made of simple elements—charging hi-hat noise, crunching snares, kerplunking piano chords and a warbling/wailing vocal by your man Lorenzo. Classic Gotham gear. Robert "Boogie" Sheftell

TECHNO GUEST REVIEWS: FUNK D'VOID



Pulling the all-nighter for the finals at Wallpaper U.: Funk D'Void

Call Lars Sandberg a Scottish Swede or a Swedish Scot, but you can't deny that under his guise as Funk D'Void he is (along with Slam's Stuart McMillan and Orde Meikle) one of Glasgow's techno pioneers. Starting out DJing at now-celebrated club nights like UFO and Nude Photo and educating himself by managing a record shop, the classically trained Sandberg made his first splash with the Chicago-flavored "Jack Me Off" in 1995, and it's been upwards from there. Put aside that he's remixed folks like Underworld and New Order; from "Soul Man" to "Bad Coffee," Funk D'Void releases have been reached the status of event, an upward spiral that's continued with the "Emotional Content" and "All That Matters" singles from his big, melodically bangin' Volume Freak, recently released on Soma Records. Now read up and check what a real techno pro is cueing up. Ron Nachmann

www.somarecords.com

BIG C WHAT'S THE SP? Mosquito/UK/12

What we have here is a solid, bass-fueled techno mash-up of Christian Vogel's haywire beats, Dave Tarrida's scary subbasses and rapper Max Turner's off the wall rhetoric—and it works! This thing brings back fond memories of the Brighton sound of the '90s, but with better plug-ins. Remixer Si Begg keeps this on a fun level (I play his mix out), and Like A Tim's mix gives us an oh-so-hip '80s version. Me like it a lot! FD'V

JAKE FAIRLEY BOOZING & LOSING Dumb Uni/CAN/12

I first encountered this label a few years back, and was pleased to hear how forward-thinking and refreshing its output was. Now with a distribution deal with Kompakt and some enticing new releases, this one really stands out. Three tracks of driving, basic bliss with production technique to die for. The main track here, "Boozing," is destined for greatness, with probably the fattest bassline I've ever heard. FD'V

10/100 Kanzleramt/GER/12

Kanzleramt is one of my favorite labels ever. Based in Berlin, it's constantly provided beautifully crafted soulful techno, and this EP showcases some of the label's finest talent. With tracks by Heiko Laux, Alexander Kowalski, Diego and Johannes Heil, this is a must buy with the lineup alone. Faves include Diego's trademark over-compressed stabathon, Heiko and Teo's "K Tune" and Alex's driving "We Keep On Rocking." Quite! FD'V

PIERRE BLASZCZYK ONE NIGHT LIKE THIS EP Horspiel Musik/GER/12

This bit comes from the tombs of Horspiel label head and Utis founder Blaszczyk, offering a bit of unexpected noise for the club. Glitch madness in a not so minimal setting, the audio palate here is reminiscent of Dot Matrix printers on meth. One cut contains a gated melodic bass, however the overall production screams true raw grit. PRAXIS

COMPUTER ROCKERS TECH-NO-ROCK Breakin'/UK/12

We have EDMX, among others, to thank for keeping the old-skool electro candle burning into the future that the genre so ably predicted a quarter-century ago. Armed with a vocoder, Linn Drum machine and a viral sense of nostalgia, Ed leaves none of da rock unturned with some of that clean, straight-ahead future-shock junk à la Grandmaster Flash's "Scorpio." Jam on it. Ron Nachmann

DJ BONE R.I.D.E. SHIP LIFE PHYSICS Subject:Detroit/US/12

Holy crap. Four years after the first release he put out on his own Subject:Detroit, we blinked and DJ Bone cranked out three hugely diverse and generally outstanding EPs of outside D-style ish. From the emotive title track of "R.I.D.E." ("Rest in Drexcian Eternity") and its future-African b-side "Wind Slaves," through "Ship Life"'s simmering and exploding Middle Passage narrative, and into the heavily percussive and tweaked tracks on "Physics," it's obvious that this guy's been targeting '04 as the year of the Bone. Watch this stuff show up in the boxes of future-jazzers like DeGo and Afronaught—it's got that kind of crossover power. Dazzling. Ron Nachmann

DROID INC. DIRTY NEON LIGHTS PV/GER/12

Gregor Trescher and Boyuk Pilavci join arms for this twiddled-up and boastful arrangement. A light and bubbly synth carries throughout as a dominant fuzzed-out bass fills the mix. Flip to add a bit of reworked percussion, refined bass, deeper effects and additional keys within the Messina and Lindsey remixes. PRAXIS

THE FOURTH STRIKE Giant And Dwarf/GER/12

Fourth in the series of artist compilation singles, this installment continues with more varied works. Lars Klein intervenes with his sample-stripped loop madness, while Ortin Cam and Mr. Vik add a bit of tribal funk on a slightly more minimal tip. Tasteful, yet experimental—a solid strike. PRAXIS

PROJECT 69 ROCKET FUEL Nummer/GER/12

This epic fabrication with brilliant execution could only be the workings of Johannes Heil and Frank Lorber. With buzzy vocoded stabs and a dirty electro-tech bass, this movement begins as a colossal FM lead with a portamento glide fills the speakers. An anthem electro remix lives on the back, leaving this 12 to be one of the year's best. PRAXIS

TIM XAVIER SCANDALISTIC ENDEAVOUR Mafia/US/12

On the original, Xavier throws some echo-delayed high-register signal beeps into this heaving, unfolding bit of techno stomp; they augment both the twangy stabs and rhythmic rumble in the background. Bryan Zentz brings a cavernous, buzzing, bass-heavy remix on the flip. Heavy duty—this ain't your big brother's techno. Ron Nachmann

Advertisement for Red Melon Records featuring the debut album 'Harlem Zip Code' by Colour World Soul. The ad includes an image of a child in a colorful car and text promoting the album's availability on iTunes and Apple Music.

Advertisement for Newsoundtheory featuring BasicLux and Madison Park. It includes images of CD covers and text describing the music as a hybrid of stylish pop and sophisticated house grooves.

A large advertisement for nice+smooth.com. It features a grid of images showing various merchandise like t-shirts, hoodies, and stickers, along with promotional text for new online store and music releases.



**HIP-HOP GUEST REVIEWS: EDAN**

It's your boy MC/DJ/producer Edan Portnoy, one of the leaders of Boston's late-'90s hip-hop renaissance. He's a true-schooler with retro roots whose two albums, *Edan the DJ: Fast Rap and Primitive Plus*, show he knows the time. One of the man's shining moments to date is the "Sprain Your Tape Deck" EP in which he mocks ("Let's Be Friends") then clocks ("Emcees Smoke Crack") his MC enemies before rollin' an anti-rhyme paean to, um, food. Edan fans won't have to wait for his *Sound of the Funky Drummer* mixtape (out in late spring) or his *Beauty And The Beat* album (crackin' early fall) to get more of the man—step out ya' spot now and get his trippy-ass new single "I See Colours" on the Lewis label. And check below for the funky lesson. *Ron Nachmann*

[www.lewisrecordings.com](http://www.lewisrecordings.com)

**CROWN CITY ROCKERS ANOTHER DAY** *Insidious Urban/US/12*

Hey, I know these peoples! So much for an unbiased review. Crown City is a live band complete with keys, bass, drums, homeboy on the MPC stabbin' up samples and shit, and then there's emcee/b-boy Raashan Ahmad speaking his mind on top of it all. This kind and talented troop were previously known as Mission. "Another Day" assumes the attitude that today is just another day to continue fighting the good fight. "Fortitude" sees Raashan and Gift of Gab (Blackalicious) successfully trading bars and double-timing it à la "New Rap Language" in order to keep up with the piano-driven rhumba/bossa-type rhythm. CCR are on some feel-good shit, but they also want to remind you that the world needs mending. "The Dogs" is a not-so-far-fetched vision of apocalypse that dissolves into a Sun Ra-tionalized cacophony of sax, drums and college students chanting, "People of the world, rise up..." *Edan*

**MR. COMPLEX FEAT. BIZ MARKIE & EL FUDGE GLUE**

*72 Records/UK/12*

Here, Mr. Complex has given us a fucked-up love song and a loved-up fuck song. If you love to fuck, you'll fucking love this record. Biz spreads some love on "Glue," whilst Complex essentially says to his lover, "You can't fuck with my true love." El Fudge fucks with the hook on the flipside's "Scrape Your Back Out," where Complex basically tells his love interest, "I love fucking you," and politely thanks the punnery that he's fuckin' with. Beyond There loves hip-hop, and have lovingly fucked with the beats on this one. *Edan*

**D.A. DÉJÀ VU** *Ampt/US/12*

D.A. aka Dagha (Dagger) is a cool brother from the Boston area who can also be heard on releases by the five-man crew Electric. D.A. made these three joints, two of which feature rapp wizard Insight on the boards, including the flavorful "School House Rock," which sees Dagha and Insight gettin' biz on the back 'n' forth. D. wasn't tryin' to take these jams to a bullshit label and do the typical song-and-dance, so he pressed somethin' like 800 copies on his own, like any blue-collar rapp scholar would. D.A. incorporates some subtle Five Percenter flavor, but basically just calls it like he sees it. A repressing with a picture cover is on the way. If you're stupid, you'll sleep like a baby on this shit. *Edan*

**SUPER 3 WHEN YOU'RE STANDING ON THE TOP** *Street Beat/US/12*

I could listen to shit like this all day...and thanks to all these late '70s/early '80s rapp reissues hitting the racks, I can afford to. "When You're Standing On The Top" is a Delmar Donnel-produced reworking of the Maze/Frankie Beverly classic "Before I Let Go." The Super 3 pop shit about the pros and cons of being "on the top" fame-wise, and they even sing a little. Shit has a little bongo break in there, too. *Edan*

**CHOPPA HOT PIECE**

*Body Head Entertainment/US/12*  
Not to be confused with Chopper from MTV's Da Band, this is the OG New Orleans Choppa who recently left No Limit to sign a five-album deal with boxing legend Roy Jones Jr.'s Body Head Entertainment. "Hot Piece" comes off like the Dirty South version of a Tanto Metro and Devonte joint: well-delivered gruff rhymes, a club-friendly bounce beat and a silky smooth hook. *Ross Hogg*

rough Neptunes feel, matches the Richmond, CA duo's spiky spits, which answer any doubts about their abilities post-MTV battle (where Lock placed a controversial second). With enough bump for the club and stop-start lyrical delivery, this cut's on its way to being a new Bay classic. *Tomas*

**INDUCE FEAT. SKAM2 AND DEJAH UNTITLED**

*Counterflow/US/12*  
The first installment of Induce's Retribution/Reciprocation series finds the producer reppin' the non-booty bass aspect of Miami hip-hop. Both sides of the record feature Induce's deft production—at times beautiful, at times gritty, but always on point—and excellent lyricism from Skam2 and Dejah, who keep it more than real without coming off like they're trying too hard with lines like, "The beat is a religion and the flow is church." Amen. *Ross Hogg*

**JACKI-O SLOW DOWN**

*SoBe Entertainment/US/12*  
"Slow Down" may just be the dairy dessert that brings more boys to the yard than yours or anyone else's. Miami's baddest mami flips rapid-fire rhymes—equal parts street smarts, clever punchlines and takes on other people's lyrics—over an uptempo beat with dancefloor heat. Come on: you know you wanna mix it with Missy's "Pass the Dutch" and answer the time-honored question, "Do the ladies run this motherfucker?" (Hell yeah.) *Ross Hogg*

**STYLES OF BEYOND PAY ME**

*Ill Boogie/US/12*  
Styles of Beyond is one of the most consistent groups around; their beats are always outstanding and their rhymes are on point. On "Pay Me," they're joined by 4-Zone for a double-time delivery that's somewhere between Project Blowed

and Busta Rhymes. The excellent remix to "Mr. Brown" is beautifully built around an Augustus Pablo sample (that always works), and on "Bleach," SOB lets you have it over a relentless beat driven by furious flutes. *Ross Hogg*

**VAST AIRE LOOK MOM...NO HANDS**

*Chocolate Industries/US/12*  
Want an independent hip-hop dream team? Look no further than "Look Mom...No Hands": Vast Aire (Cannibal Ox) over a beat by Madlib (Quasimoto, Yesterday's New Quintet). Vast spits assured, furious flows—no easy task with a typically chaotic Madlib beat (complete with disjointed bookends). On the flip's "Why's Da Sky Blue?," a dark, eerie track by the aptly named Cryptic, Vast hearkens back to when video games were 8-bit and Ric Flair was his favorite wrestler. *Ross Hogg*



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You know the man's about to make a seerious point when he reaches for the specs, an' ting: the one like Mampi Swift

**DRUM & BASS GUEST REVIEWS: MAMPI SWIFT**

As one of the more underrated figures in drum & bass, 15-year DJ/production veteran Mampi Swift makes no claims that jungle music owes him anything. Instead, he's just been working it, releasing countless singles—most of them, along with an album, on his own Charge and Blade labels—and touring the globe brandishing his simple rolling dancefloor d&b style. We've already heard plenty of noise so far this year from Swift with his overwhelming single "Zion," but just wait—forthcoming is a remix of one of his classics, '97's "Hi-Tek," along with a string of collabs he's got going with fellow badman Blame, the first called "Sleepwalker." All this plus an '04 Charge tour in the works? Just cool, Swift... let us know what you've been hearing. *Ron Nachmann*

[www.chargerecordings.com](http://www.chargerecordings.com)

**CALYX HEAD HUNTER Metalheadz/UK/12**

Calyx has shown his talents over the last year or two with a different edge that is the Metalheadz policy, as we all know. How would I describe this track? Well, Goldie would say it's a "fucking b-boy track," with b-boy stabs that growl at you and extremely phat drums and deep strings that make it a definite thumbs up! *MS*

**DJ FRESH FLOODLIGHT Breakbeat Kaos/UK/12**

Fresh has not only raised the bar on drum & bass production as a whole, he's also brought his own abilities up another level. "Floodlight" is not just a drum & bass track, it's a cinematic piece of music that deals with the story of two ravers walking towards a club. We hear music in the distance as they get nearer the club, then the door opens and....slam! Without spoiling the rest, all I will say is look out for the mega-switch after 16 bars of the main drop—fucking baaad!!! *MS*

**DJ ZINC STEPPIN STONES Bingo/UK/12**

We all know what Zinc is capable of. This track is for the mixing crew—if you like to roll out mixes from start to finish, this is the one. From the raver's point of view, this is what you call party music—even though it's another Amen tune, it still works well, with a rift similar to "Casino Royale" and slamming breaks. The word "anthem" springs to mind. Zinc with another anthem—what a surprise! *MS*

**BLAME OUTER ZONE**

*720°/UK/12*

Celestial atmospheres pave the way to the aptly titled "Outer Zone," as Blame builds the pressure to the breaking point before the technoid beast at the core comes out punching and kicking. Things keep cracking on the flip, "Hologram," which starts off with clean, crisp percussion and dizzying atmospheres before things start to slowly unwind and the jazz-tech hook rolls on through with inimitable style. *Chris Muniz*

**BY DESIGN TIKAL**

*Cal-Tek/US/12*

Fans of Klute and Matrix will appreciate the intricate percussion and deep dancefloor vibes that permeate "Tikal" from the L.A.-based By Design crew. Dreamy pads and stuttering breaks keep the energy high before the bottom end gets heavy and the groovy hook takes control. The flip's "Undercover" lightens the mood a touch with playful beats and funky chords that give way to a warm b-line and wall-rattling bounce. Sure to please. *Chris Muniz*

**FIFTH ELEMENT STONE COLD EP**

*Architecture/UK/12*

Fifth Element is a five-man collective anchored by Loxy & Ink, who deliver both beats and raps on this experimental d&b outing. The breaks ultimately compete with streetwise lyrics on all cuts, from the original—a dark roller with scissoring synths—to Keaton's lackluster remix and Bad Company's pounding dancefloor version. Hip-hop fans make sure to check DJ Crystl's piece,

an innovative number full of breaking glass and rock guitars. *Star Eyes*

**KLUTE GLUESNIFFER (HIVE RMX)**

*Breakbeat Science/US/12*

Hive and Klute touch down on a pair of bits that showcase the label's diverse sound. Hive turns in a dark and nasty remix of Klute's "Gluesniffer" before Klute eases up on the flip with the funky "Oshima." Centered on a funky groove that keeps evolving on through to the end, expect this one to pull at those heartstrings all summer long. *Chris Muniz*

**PHOBIA FUTURE SOUL**

*Critical/UK/12*

The dramatic "Future Soul" borrows as much from old-school Doc Scott as it does from LTJ Bukem. It's a banging slice of drum-driven floor power, with sliced-up percussion, classic Metalheadz-esque vocal stabs and metallic elements. The flip's "Mandalay" is similarly retro-drenched, with nostalgic keys, an "I feel it" female vocal, and deliciously bouncy breaks. Total Science, eat your heart out. *Star Eyes*

**POLAR UNTITLED**

*Levitated/US/12*

For Levitated Recordings third release, they present a pair of Polar tunes that take us deep and dark. "Untitled" runs with haunting key structures, waving basslines and an infectious Middle Eastern-sounding flute that will keep you transfixed on the dancefloor. The flip, "Second Nature," moves with punchy breaks and a dirty, dark bassline. Keep it coming. *Ryan Romana*



\*Next shoot, we take a photo next to my crate of records, alright?"; DJ Language

**FUTURE JAZZ GUEST REVIEWS: DJ LANGUAGE**

Lord knows how many languages fill the air of New York City. But only one clears Gotham's air with skilled and eclectic sets of soul and funk breaks, classic and new underground hip-hop, leftfield soul, electro, r&b, reggae, Afrobeat and house—that's DJ Language. Raised in Chicago and spinning since 1995, Language has held down as many as four weekly residencies in his hometown. Moving to New York and teaming up with DJ/producer Rich Medina, Language helped throw the weekly Stoned Soul party starting in 2000, getting props as one of NYC's best parties in *Flyer* magazine. He's toured the world and recently started the acclaimed monthly NegroClash party at New York's APT, which highlights black electronic music and has featured guests ranging from Afrika Bambaataa to Charlie Dark and Mr. Fingers. Let him speak. *Ron Nachmann*

[www.djlanguage.com](http://www.djlanguage.com)

**DJ MITSU FEAT. DWELE RIGHT HERE Planetgroove/JPN/12**

The raw, underground Dwele that we've all been fiending for is back on this track with Japan's DJ Mitsu. A gritty, dirt-Rhodes backdrop brushes up against plaintive, staccato sax, and a spare, shuffling break gives Dwele's longing, love-soaked vocals a gorgeous emotional landscape to inhabit. This makes me hungry for more. *DJL*

**KAI ALCE M-7 Mahogani/US/12**

Atlanta's Kai Alce is one of the best-kept secrets in American house music. This track on Kenny Dixon's stellar Mahogani label is a beautiful late-night affair that masterfully combines nuanced Afro-tinged percussion and a perfectly moody synth backdrop with an oblique, longing vocal sample. Already one of my favorite tracks of the year. *DJL*

**PURPLE FLASH WE CAN MAKE IT (DARSHAN JESRANI RMX) Environ/US/12**

Environ honcho Morgan Geist enlists his Metro Area partner Jesrani for this gorgeous remix of the latest installment in the label's Unclassics series of obscure vintage electro jams. Purple Flash's sunny, synth-washed 1984 original (a slept-on masterpiece in its own right) gets the abstract New York dancefloor dub treatment, adding additional keyboard and percussion embellishments for increased listening pleasure. What a beauty. *DJL*

**JOHN ARNOLD CABIN FEVER**

*ROY DAVIS JR. IF YOU WANNA Ubiquity/US/12*

"Cabin Fever" sounds like snow-bound Detroit musician Arnold burning Afro-broken beats to unfreeze his water pipes—it's heated! Elsewhere, album cut "Inside" featuring Malik Alstin's soaring vocals gets a triumphant uptempo Mr. Scruff remix, and the EP is rounded off with the string-laden digital soul of "Separately Together." Meanwhile, Davis Jr.'s "I Know..." melts hearts with sensuous Chicago house rhythms and Ayro's confident vox, and John Beltran's Brazil-Carnival remix will have you marching and beating pots and pans in your bedroom. The real treat here is r&b singer Terry Dexter's Ubiquity debut on the Davis Jr. plus P'Taah-enabled "If You Wanna." Sweet release. *Derek Grey*

**BLACK GRASS GOING HOME EP**

*PEPE DELUXE LYING PEACEFULLY Catskills/UK/12*

Black Grass belts out adult contempo downtempo ('scuse the term). Balearic beats with sultry vocals—around for a decade—are now entrenched with the success of acts like Zero 7 and Wax Poetic. "Going Home"'s vocal-led blue-eyed soul is as languid as it is listenable, while Pepe Deluxe's pumped-up remix is backed by a flurry of drum solos and distortion pedal bass. The EP closes with superb MC Maylay Sparks' moody hip-hop on "Self Assessment" and the polished "Finest Thing," featuring scratches by Krafty Kuts. Elsewhere, Deluxe's own "Lying Peacefully" fuses folksy crooning with Ralph Myerz's echo-beat atmosphere. Next stop: BBC1. *Tomas*

**TREVOR LOVEYS THE BOUNCE**

*Freerange/UK/12*

Trevor's second single for London's Freerange does bounce—with cut-up disco clips and gated 4/4 beats, it's funky house in a vacuum compression chamber with Brass Construction gasping for air. Trevor's own Willesden Rub is smoother and more danceable with its succulent stabbing Rhodes. San Diego's Hipp-E's promising remix is way too similar to Jazzanova's Masters At Work with Roy Ayers remix from two years ago. Same samples, chord sounds, etc. It's good to bounce, bad to bite. *Tomas*

**MURR GIRL GONE WEST**

*Public Transit/CAN/12*

From Toronto comes Murr, collaborating with Rustic Hut for this EP on PTR. Broken future soul pervades "Fall Apart," taking its deep flow in the right ways. "Watching You" gets heavier on the beats, with deep synth bass that funks the tune up into a floor-stomper, while "See You Again" goes the broken beat route with syncoating rhythm, tough basslines and a touch of sonic ambiance. Toronto gets its groove on, dontcha know! *Velanche*

**QUANT TRYIN'**

*Ecco Chamber/AUS/12*

The Vienna-based Ecco Chamber label has cemented a well-earned reputation during its short existence. "Tryin'" by Swedish don Jonas Ernest is soulful and warm, aided nicely by Ernesto's vocals, and Brighton's Quantic and Rotterdam's Gerd step in with unique interpretations. Also check "Chills N' Thrills" here, with Jazzinho's Guida de Palma crooning over Quant's signature funk. With Quant's second album in tow, look for the father of Gonkyburg to leave skid marks in his wake. *Velanche*

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www.untschooled.com



Guys, she's heard just about every line there is, so don't try it: Femme Fatale

**2-STEP GUEST REVIEWS: FEMME FATALE**

There's a reason Femme Fatale was voted Best DJ at last year's Underground Awards and nominated for the same at the UKG awards—the lady's simply got authority in the UK garage scene. Besides having played everywhere from Dallas to Dubai, Femme's been putting it down with authority since 2002 both on her Wednesday night show (10pm to midnight GMT) on BBC 1Xtra, and at her residency at UKG night Smooove at London's Ministry of Sound (for whom she compiled the ultra-fine *Street Beats* compilation). She's just finished part two of the Urban Deck Divas Tour with Lisa Unique and DJ Asha raining the best in hip-hop, r&b and garage on the whole of Blighty. Her label, Fatale Attraction has been going from strength to strength, with

tracks like Plasticman's "Spring Roller" selling out within weeks and tunes on deck like Cameo and J Sweet's "Bad Girl Style" featuring Gemma Fox. She's got a load of tracks of her own on tap as well. Have a look at what the gyal's been puttin' down lately. *Ron Nachmann*  
[www.djfemme fatale.com](http://www.djfemme fatale.com)

**DJ CHARMZY ROLLERCOASTER**  
*Black Ops/UK/12*

This tune is going to be one of the biggest sub-low tunes of 2004. Rolling bassline with rolling strings equals massive energy that the dance-floor cannot refuse, always getting a pull-up in Ministry of Sound. Charmzy's the leading sub low producer for me at the moment *FF*

**MR. FIDGIT FEAT. DONAE'O DILEMMA**  
*Social Circles/UK/12*

This one is the follow-up to the biggest tune of 2003, "Bounce." The chorus of this is as heavy as philosophy, the production is neat and the MC's nice. A bouncy bubbler, but it's not quite bounce. Watch out for the multi-talented Donae'o, he's going to be big in 2004. *FF*

**SCANDALOUS UNLIMITED FEAT. TKO & CARLY BOND BLEEDING GUMS RIDDIM**  
*True Tiger/UK/12*

Scandalous comes with some seriously tight production, one of the top of the new generation producers to hit our scene. These boys do it right in every spectrum of UKG, but here they seem to be making their own rules, taking things to a different level with this experimental vibe. This one went straight on the 1Xtra playlist, proving its immense quality and originality. *FF*

**AQUASKY SEVILLE RMX**  
*Shadow Cryptic/UK/12*

General Midi twists Aquasky's paeon to Spanish house, "Seville," into an electro-flooded rave track with tweaky touches and a long, minimal intro. But turn this baby over for the real magic from Deekline and Ed Solo, who face ass-ward toward Miami with a squelchy booty-bass remix of "Coffee," featuring bouncy vocals from the Ragga Twins. Get low! *Star Eyes*

**DJ VIRUS RUDE STING REFIX**  
*West Beat 12/UK/12*

Your man Virus takes another crack at his explosive debut for the West Beat Sound System's label, and it pounds in a minimal and vertical style with a twanging bass note, relenting kick, eerie flute notes and shuffling snares. Raw and ugly for ya, as is the flip's freakily named "Pancreas Kid." *Ron Nachmann*

**TODD EDWARDS & FILTHY RICH FEAT. DAMON TRUETT STORMY DAYS**  
*I Records/US/12*

The God and his man Rich Crisco hit us off with some soul on a track that sounds positively ebullient in context with all the grime that's captured our attention. Edwards's swirling, skating rink organ chords and orchestra samples cut all to hell into an almost ritualized jerkiness counterpointing vocalist Damon Truett's low, breathy moan. After 16 years of working together, it comes totally natural to these cats. *Ron Nachmann*

**ELITE FORCE MELODIK HYPNOTIC**  
*Kingsize/UK/12*

"Melodik Hypnotic" is a serviceable trancey breaks cut, in which steady minimal breaks give way to optimistic techno melodies that sound ripped off an R&S record circa 1994. Flip for the hotness: "Jack the Joint," an acidic,

jackin' number that melds nu-skoool sounds with Chicago trax synth vamps and subtle tribal drums. *Star Eyes*

**FREESTYLERS GET A LIFE RMX**  
*Against the Grain/UK/12*

Fierce vocals that get fixed, twisted and dubbed out elevate Pox Music's remix of "Get A Life" above the rest of the hip-hop-inflected fare, as spongy bass and up-rocking snares form a solid backdrop. Should you need to get your glowsticks out, visit the flipside for Krafty Kuts' version of "Punks," which combines hi-NRG breaks with Wu-Tang samples to give the effect of being in the middle of a DJ Dan set circa 1994. *Star Eyes*

**KODE9 VS. DADDI GEE SIGN OF THE DUB/SPIT**  
*Hyperdub/UK/12*

Hyperdub/Dubplate keeper Steve Goodman launches his Hyperdub imprint with two plates

of minimalist UK grime arrangements wrapped around ultra-lethargic MC/spoken wordist Daddi Gee's fathoms-deep voice. On the first slab, a throbbing bass tone, a semi-open hi-hat and the occasional eternally echoing dub chord are all that jab at Daddi's recitation of Prince's "Sign of the Times," while half-time garridge fuels the spooky flipside, "Stalker." "Spit," the second record, finds Gee havin' at Public Enemy's "Welcome to the Terrordome" in front of Goodman's chunky, haunted skarage. Order this one up at ya shops. *Ron Nachmann*

**WONDER CANCER**  
*Zodiac/UK/12*

Brassy and proud half-time bizzness on this one. Wonder gives you an almost heavy-metal kind of chug stuffed with laser bits, whispering female voices, stolid synth chords, and what sounds like a car engine turning over! Now that's street. *Ron Nachmann*

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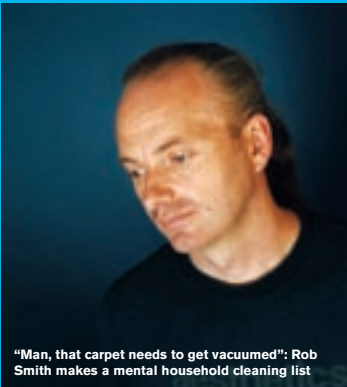
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"Man, that carpet needs to get vacuumed": Rob Smith makes a mental household cleaning list

**LEFTFIELD GUEST REVIEWS:**

**ROB SMITH**

Now-school dubster Rob Smith's influence on the soulful side of British dance music can hardly be overstated. During the late '80s, as part of Smith & Mighty with partner Ray Mighty, Smith helped create the amalgam of hip-hop, dub and uptempo elements (from house and electro) that became known as the Bristol sound. While spotlights like Tricky and Portishead got their shine on, Smith and Co. forged through the '90s, keeping drum & bass rootial via their More Rockers label and getting overdue props with three album releases on !K7. Smith has now found a solo voice with his stunningly diverse new album, *Up on the Downs* (Grand Central), and after all these years, he's not lost his love of vinyl puddles, as shown below. *Ron Nachmann*

[www.grandcentralrecords.co.uk](http://www.grandcentralrecords.co.uk)

**BOOMCLICK FEAT. ROSA FERNANDEZ FOLLOW LOVE** *Sunday Best/UK/12*

I'm loving this. It does the whole hair-on-the-back-of-the-neck thing with me. A feel-good track with a peace/love/unity vibe. "Follow Love" is trippy yet orchestrated, and comes with three mixes, the original being my fave with its yearning vocal and dubbed-up space noises. The Marky Radio Remix gives a more housey, beach-party feel, while on the flipside is Blue Skin's uplifting drum & bass-driven remix with a rolling break, orchestral strings and effected vocals. Play loud, close your eyes and levitate. *RS*

**JFB NO DESTINATION EP** *One Eye/UK/12*

JFB (Jammy Fu\*\*ing Bastards) hail from Brighton, UK and bring four tracks of fun, each with its own vibe. "The Temple Ball" fluctuates between a kind of breakbeat mambo and a Moroccan dub sand-dance with cuts and scratches—it's cooler than you might think. The title track continues the filmic flavor, but is set in darker, deeper borders, slightly upping the tension. Then comes "Banana," which is just bonkers! More sand-dance, but this time in a drum & bass style, complete with killa drop into Amen and subness. By now, the desert sandal that is "Escape from Cuba" comes as no surprise, and suitably rounds off this ace slate. Good work and loads of fun. *RS*

**STEREOTYP MEETS AL-HACA PHASE ONE EP** *Klein/AUS/12*

Alongside the Different Drummer crew, these guys continue to take dub/reggae to the next level. "Blaze and Cook" featuring Shagon is dark and sparse with an infectious one-drop dancehall flavor, while Lady Saw gets slow, hot and rude on "Lately." "Boss It" featuring Hawkeye is bouncy and futuristic with a gangsta edge, while "Watch Me Flip" with R.Q.M on the mic is more hip-hop than dancehall, but retains the frequencies and overall vibe of this boom release. Raise your foot! *RS*

**CASINO VS. JAPAN/FREESCHA SPLIT EP**

*Wobblyhead/US/CD/12*

Like a tempting amuse bouche, this seven-track split EP precedes a CxJ double-CD of unreleased goodies and a taste of both acts' future directions. For CxJ, it's increased Boards of Canada-esque melodic moodiness; "Durusey" being particularly dark and poignant. Alternately, Freescha sidesteps the disco-funk drama of their acclaimed *What's Come Inside of You* for bubbly, textural snippets. *Heath K. Hignight*

**LOUIS DIGITAL INSURGENCY SOUL**

*Arcola/UK/12*

This third entry on Warp's dancefloor-only offshoot Arcola features Louis Digital, best known for his house/hip-hop hybrids on Footwork. The a-side, "Ecology of Fear," rides closer to his prior work, infusing punchy tech beats with house sauciness. The two b-side cuts veer into harder, electro-tinged territory, with "Dance Floor Microphysics" pumping out a damned crisp bass bump within a tight microhouse vibe. "Insurgency Soul" doesn't wow like the first Arcola by Dub Kult, but it'll do. *Heath K. Hignight*

**THE NOTWIST DIFFERENT CARS AND TRAINS**

*Damino/US/12*

Munich indie-scruff trio the Notwist are a lucky bunch, getting three of the tunes from their *Neon Golden* album from last year and a newie re-rubbed by the best of the left. Console tweaks the Belle & Sebastian tenderness of "Neon Golden" and "Pilot" with some 4/4 bwippiness, while Four Tet and Manitoba go all epic with the eight minute deconstructed electro/emo crunch of "This Room." Loopsoul ends things with a gorgeous dub of the title track, worth the price alone. Feel it. *Ron Nachmann*



It's enough to make me wonder sometimes: streetlights have been going dark as I walk underneath (not just once or twice but five and seven and 12 times!); Kentucky Fried Chicken keeps taunting me with their here-today, gone tomorrow Popcorn Chicken (and I'm starting to feel like Homer Simpson and his beloved "Rib-Wich"); and my usually productive, post-bender Mondays and Tuesdays have just turned into one big nap filled with weird dreams and visions of Nat Turner and slow-motion car-wrecks. Not that I think I'm cursed or anything, it's just a wee bit ominous, like maybe the Big One's finally coming or I'm about to bowl a 300.

On the other hand, yesterday was the Dawn of the Saucy Black Grandpas at my local bank. (I'm not kidding, there were at least three octogenarians in their tracksuits and fisherman's hats, jauntily going about their business and flirting loudly with the 18-year-old bank tellers). And the morning was so perfectly beautiful it looked like the Marin Headlands were across the street out my back window. It was so awe-inspiring, I had to blow off deadline and take a long afternoon stroll across town [*You poor thing --Eds*].

No joke, though: the City has been an amazing place to be this winter. Great movies at the Red Vic on Haight, classic dinners and cocktails at Original Joe's in the Tenderloin, hikes through the Presidio...Not to mention the Fife speakeasy downtown, the Boogie Boutique lock-ins, and all the other word-of-mouth goodies you just gotta be here to experience...And some mighty fine tunes, too. Check it...

1) **WHAT ABOUT US?** (*Hard Knock/US/CD*) Seriously hard-hitting compilation of indie hip-hop's reaction to post 9/11 America, hosted by the Bay Area's own media assassin Davey D and featuring tracks from Blackalicious, Zion I, BukueOne and Hobo Junction, among about a dozen other talents. Standouts are LA's Ab Rude & Tribe Unique's "Rapcha," Rhode Island's Non-Prophets and the walloping Sly & Robbie remix of "Bomb the World" by Michael Franti & Spearhead.

2) **DIZZEE RASCAL "FIX UP, LOOK SHARP"** (*XL-Matador/US/12*) Blazing hot, son, no shit. Loops Billy Squire's "Big Beat" into a seamless monster for young Dizzee to rock over. Kid's gonna be huge. Look for him on tour this summer with Outkast and Busta Rhymes. (Just kidding...but am I?!).

3) **SOUND KLASH AMMO DUB PLATE BLENDS AND BREAKS VOL. 2** (*Deadly Mix/US/EP*) Didn't take long for Volume 2, and by the time you're reading this, Volume 3 should be arriving on the shelves. Rolo1-3 drops it even harder this time, with remixes featuring Snoop and Dre, 50 Cent and Elephant Man. Super-deadly is the "Milkshake"/soul mash-up and the "Pass That Dutch" blend—good God! Red Stripes all night for my man!

4) **URSULA RUCKER "THIS"** (*!K7/US/12*) Ill slow-motion four-on-the-floor courtesy of Jazzanova on the a-side, but the real treat is the non-LP b-side featuring a beautiful, minimal piano and rhymes from Hawkeye Phanatic buoying Ms. Rucker's standout words of wisdom.

5) **KNOMADZ "THE GIFTED"** (*SB Rekids/US/12*) Slept-on Chi-Town crew, but surely not for long. The title track, which is backed by the slamming "Freedom Riders," is already a couple years old, but look out for their latest material coming out this year. [www.knomadz.com](http://www.knomadz.com)

6) **KILL THE ROBOTS PURPLE** (*self/US/CD*) The next two SF groups to make some big noise in the electro-dirtrock scene will be the Paradise Boys and Kill the Robots. Where Paradise Boys are more disco/sex, KTR are grungier and darker, with a decidedly more Joy Division/New Order sound. Look out for new songs from this five-piece, and gigs in SF and LA in the spring and summer.

7) **STREETS: SAN FRANCISCO** (*Build Worldwide/US/VHS & DVD*) Judah Skateboards' Satva Leung has crafted a fine cross-section of street-skating in San Francisco, circa right now. The moves are amazing, and the DVD features tons of bonus interviews and legendary SF spots, plus graffiti art, restaurant picks and beats from many of the Bay's finest. Find it at [www.streets.tv](http://www.streets.tv) or any self-respecting skateshop.

8) **BASTARD JAZZ "UNTITLED"** (*Bastard Jazz/US/7*) A twisted and lovely limited edition mash-up 7", if you can track it down. Shelly Duvall (a.k.a. Olive Oyl) croons "He Needs Me" over a shuffling merry-go-round beat while over on the flip, the Bastard crew remixes Lawrence Welk covering "Puff the Magic Dragon." I did say twisted, right? Also look out for more new tracks and remixes this year from Dr. Rubberfunk, Q-Burns and more on this fun little label outta Brooklyn.

9) **JRK "INST. SAMPLE BASED HIP-HOP"** (*white/US/EP*) Excellently produced and pressed, this is, well, exactly what the title says it is. Might be from Oakland, could be from Guam, who knows? This is one of those beauties that ended up in the bag after another night of hard partying at the Red Wine Social. E-mail [jeggy2001@yahoo.com](mailto:jeggy2001@yahoo.com) for more info.

10) **MF DOOM & MF GRIMM BEST OF MF** (*Day By Day/US/CD*) I would break up with any girl or punch any friend who claimed not to dig the MFs. Period.

11) **INDUCE FEAT. SKAM/DEJAH "PART ONE. UNTITLED (SQUARE 4 REMIX FEAT. DENA SUPA)"** (*Counterflow/US/12*) The original's cool, but Square 4 just puts a bit of Starsky & Hutch into his mix, along with some ill scratches and KRS "whoop!"s that move this along just right. Actually, the "Takeback '93 Mix" is sweet, too. Nice one all around.

12) **TELEFON TEL AVIV "MY WEEK BEATS YOUR YEAR"** (*Hefty/US/12*) I could coin about three new musical genres in this column alone, and frankly, I'm getting a little tired. The sun is shining, there are girls running around the streets, and I could use a tuna melt right about now. "Badass electro-fuzz and disco-breaks" will have to suffice, but this jam is HOT! And if this is your cup of wine, pick up Funkstörung's "Fat Camp Feva" for more of the similar.

**LUCKY 13) PAPALETE MEXICAN GRILL** (*San Francisco/restaurant*) DJ Mr.E's tiny little joint on 24th Street at Valencia serves up some of the finest mole, carne asada burritos and fish tacos of anywhere I've ever been. And the salsa is heaven. Happy five years, folks!

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## IN THE STUDIO BEANFIELD

MUNICH CLUB JAZZ MAESTROS BEANFIELD PROVE THAT BALANCE IS BEST WHEN IT COMES TO MAKING KILLER DANCE MUSIC.  
TEXT TIM PRATT IMAGE ANDREW ARNOLD

Germany's Beanfield is the brainchild of longtime producer Jan Krause and keyboardist Michael Mettke (also of Trüby Trio and Fauna Flash). Formed ten years ago by Krause and Compost Records honcho Michael Reinboth, Beanfield has released a string of lively and sensual nu-jazz and warm organic dance music infused with elements of r&b, soul and funk, paving the way for the original acid jazz movement of the early and mid-1990s. The group's 1995 debut single, "Charles," got a kick start thanks to Gilles Peterson and their debut self-titled album followed two years later. Beanfield's latest album, *Seek*, was just released on Compost and finds Krause and Co. rediscovering their live roots. Krause gave *XLR8R* some insight on his music's progression and studio techniques.

**XLR8R: What components do you consider to be the core of your studio equipment?**

**Jan Krause:** Logic Audio [sequencing software] is maybe the main instrument in the studio. We also use a lot of vintage instruments like Fender Rhodes, Memorymoog and Jupiter 8, but it all ends up in Logic. For mixdown, we use a Mackie d8b digital desk with a lot of vintage outboards like Urei 1178+1176 compressors, old tube EQs, old EMT reverbs...it's the combination of digital and analog that is important for our sound.

**XLR8R: How has the advent of computer production software changed your approach to recording? Have your recording techniques changed much?**

**JK:** It hasn't changed our recording techniques a lot but everything is much easier with the latest Logic version, which is really a great program. Back in the [old] days, we had to record on 24-track or ADAT and resample everything from tape. Now it's already recorded in the computer and you save a lot of time and money.

**XLR8R: How long have you been producing?**

**JK:** I started 18 years ago with an Atari computer, Emagic Notator software and a Roland MKS100 sampler and some old MIDI keyboards.

**XLR8R: Are you a trained musician? If so, what are some instruments you play? How important is it to be a trained musician?**

**JK:** I play bass guitar while Michael Mettke plays piano and acoustic guitar. Being trained is very important for us because we write and mainly perform the songs on our own.

**XLR8R: Do you consider yourself secretive when it comes to production techniques or are you open about what you do?**

**JK:** Actually, there are no secrets. I think every producer has the same options. It's simply what you do with them.

**XLR8R: How much of a role does sampling play in your music?**

**JK:** Sampling is still a major tool of our production when it comes to creating sounds for beat programming, special electronic sounds, etc. But we don't sample other artists' ideas. We make the music ourselves.

**XLR8R: What's the biggest misconception about being a music producer?**

**JK:** Many people think that it's easy to create a good track because the computer does the job anyway. But people don't realize it's hard work and sometimes takes a lot of time and struggle to make your musical ideas become reality.

**XLR8R: How difficult is it to work with a partner in the studio? And how do you figure out what each person's role is when recording together?**

**JK:** If you work with a partner you really have to get along with each other and you need a pretty similar opinion about music. If the "relationship" works, you really have an advantage over working on your own because you build up a unique synergy by putting two peoples' best ideas together. Each person's role works out automatically because each has certain skills in which he's best.

**XLR8R: Do you record at home or at a specific studio?**

**JK:** I have my own studio with a recording room, but it's not at home. I need to differentiate between home and working place. Also, the studio itself is a great inspiration. It's an old recording studio in which a lot of interesting artists used to record. So there's a lot of spirit in it.

**XLR8R: Do you have any advice for someone who's interested in learning how to produce?**

**JK:** Follow your own vibe and work hard. A lot of people want to change you but the only thing that's really important is to fulfill your own ideas.

[www.compost-records.com](http://www.compost-records.com)



In Beanfield's studio (clockwise from left): Roland Jupiter 8, Logic screen, Moog Memorymoog, Fender Rhodes, Mackie d8b

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STANTON

## MACHINES

Like the clerics from which he derives his name, Lamont Dorrell, a.k.a. Ayatollah, is a hip-hop leader of divine proportions. His beats have been the backdrop for hot joints by Inspectah Deck, Cormega, Guru and Masta Ace, and he's also contributed music to Talib Kweli's *Quality* and Mos Def's *Black On Both Sides*. With a sound falling somewhere between Pete Rock's soul-brother chops and Marley Marl's funk-fueled breaks, Ayatollah fashions melodic but crackin' East Coast compositions. On the phone from his new crib in Brooklyn, the Queens native speaks animatedly about his youth spent glued to the radio listening to Red Alert and Marley, getting his first break from Tragedy Khadafi and his boom-bap methodology. With a hot eight-song instrumental EP, *Personal Legend Volume 1* (Fat Beats), on the streets 'Tollah gave us some insight on his music life.

**XLR8R: Are you getting a lot of calls from MCs or labels that want to work with you?**

**A:** I get people coming by every day to hear material. I got a call from [former Flip Mode Squad member] Lord Have Mercy, he's out in Brooklyn; I'm trying to hook up with him. I just got a call from Bahamadia in Philly. So, you know, people, they'll find me.

**XLR8R: What was the first indication that you'd go into production?**

**A:** I was around music my whole life—my parents, brothers, sisters...they listened to a lot of music. I started DJing around '88-'89 [and continued] until 1998. My era of music was the Marley Marl era. [People like] Mark the 45 King, Erick Sermon, Clark Kent—they were prominent producers back then.

**XLR8R: Did you try and figure out what those producers were sampling?**

**A:** Before I started making beats, I would get the original record [those producers sampled], just to see how they used them; I would just listen to see how they manipulated it. I'd be like, 'Wow, they took *this* off a record and made it into a whole different song?'. Also, I was always up for a challenge. Whether it be music, sports, or whatever, I'm up for the challenge to learn. And I was like, 'I gotta get into [making music]'. [Making music] kept my mind pumping with new ideas. I thought differently after I heard those records [by Marley and 45 King].

**XLR8R: So what sports are you into?**

**A:** I'm a heavy basketball fan; college ball, too. I actually played with a couple of cats that are in the NBA now—Kenny Anderson, Rod Strickland, Mark Jackson—playground ball, tournaments...As a matter of fact, I have some music on one of the And-1 *Rucker Park* DVDs with Cocoa Brovas.

**XLR8R: What was your first track that came out on vinyl?**

**A:** It was an independent record on Wolfpack Entertainment for this MC named Bee Why from Queens. I did three singles with him. Then I [got asked to] DJ for Intelligent Hoodlum [a.k.a. Tragedy Khadafi].

**XLR8R: What came after the tour with Tragedy?**

**A:** I did some scratches for him on his album *Tragedy: Saga of a Hoodlum* (1993, A&M), on the song "Street Life." Trag told me I should start working on beats but at the time I didn't really have the equipment.

**XLR8R: What did you originally have to work with?**

**A:** I had a rackmount DigiTech [RDS 8000 sampler], with a zero to eight-second sample-rate adjustment. I had to overdub and layer [samples] and use it to its capacity. Every time you overlapped the sounds, the previous sound would lose some quality. [But the tracks I made] were enough to convince Trag that I had [skills]; I just needed equipment. So he reached out to Marley Marl, and two to three weeks later he came by my place and [gave me] an Akai MCP-60. He was like, "Work with it."

**XLR8R: Did you get more gear after that?**

**A:** Right now I'm using the Akai MPC-62. It's basically the same exact machine [as the 60], except it has a headphone jack, and the 60 has an adjustable screen—that's the only difference. The sound quality and sample rate are the same. For "Black On Both Sides" I used the 62. I also have a Roland JV-30 keyboard and a Roland 303 Groovebox but I mainly use simple equipment—Technics turntables, Gemini mixer, monitor speakers and my records.

**XLR8R: So it doesn't come down to having the best gear?**

**A:** It's not even the equipment, it's how you translate what's inside you into the machine. It doesn't matter—you could have speakers with holes in the woofers, or keyboards with keys missing—you could still maneuver it to make tracks.

**XLR8R: How did you feel the first time you heard one of your tracks on the radio?**

**A:** It was crazy! I was at home asleep, and my sister ran upstairs and said, "Your beat is on the radio!" I turned on the radio and it was really on there. It was a good feeling. People were calling me telling me they heard the tracks. But I had played a lot of beats for my close friends before—they have a heads up on a lot of tracks you hear now. Like the Mos Def beat for "Ms. Fat Booty"—he got that in 2002, but I did the actual beat in 1998. But hearing it on the radio, that just gave me the green light that my sound has been accepted and I can run full-throttle with it.

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### SONAR STEPS UP

Competition in the music sequencing software arena has resulted in some amazing breakthroughs for producers. Companies are now battling to release bi-yearly and annual updates of their programs to equal or better their rivals. In just a few short years Cakewalk's suite of digital production tools has advanced rapidly, none more so than its **Sonar 3 Producer Edition**.

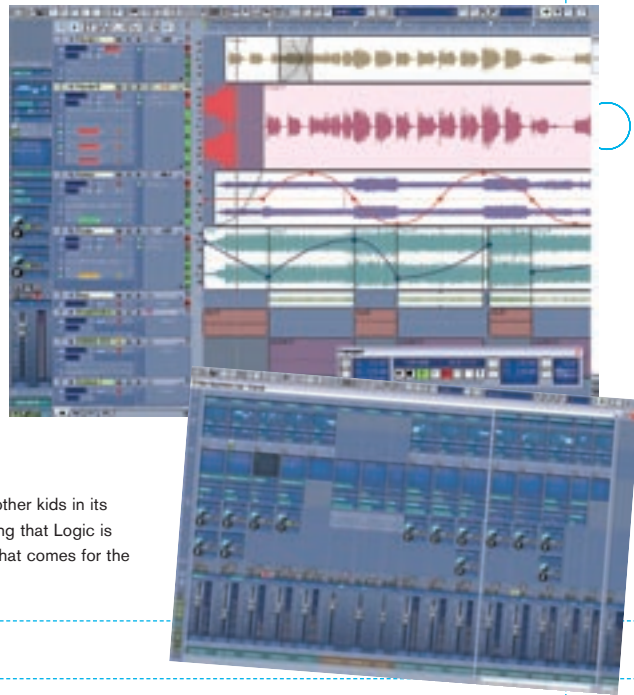
The first thing that got me excited about Sonar 3 was its well-overdue visual makeover. Finally moving away from the plain windows template, this latest edition of the popular program looks rather snazzy. In terms of power and versatility, Sonar can now actually compete with older rivals like Cubase and Logic, especially for real-time audio processing.

One of the most exciting new features is the new mixer. Resembling the Logic mixer, you can now easily drag and drop plug-ins to and fro, or between channels. It has inserts, sends and returns, and you have per-channel EQ with graphic diagrams. Another major improvement is the fact that Sonar now allows you to run VSTi plugs in addition to the standard DirectX. Combine this with the built-in Rewire application, which lets you fully automate and control programs like Reason, Ableton Live and Project 5, and you should have plenty to geek out on for a while.

Another cool new feature is the VSampler 3.0, a soft sampler that offers easy and detailed wave editing, and of course supports all major audio formats. For the hardcore audio snobs, the inclusion of Lexicon's Pantheon Reverb is maybe the most appealing upgrade. Lexicon has always been known as one of the leaders in high quality effects, and this latest software addition definitely doesn't let us down.

Previous to this release, Sonar seemed to be stuck in its troubled teens—it didn't evolve as fast as the other kids in its class. However, this latest installment has made it a worthy challenger to its two main rivals, and considering that Logic is no longer available for PC, many would agree that Sonar 3 simply is the best all-purpose studio software that comes for the platform. *K Sagstad*

Sonar 3 Producer Edition MSRP: \$479; [www.cakewalk.com](http://www.cakewalk.com)

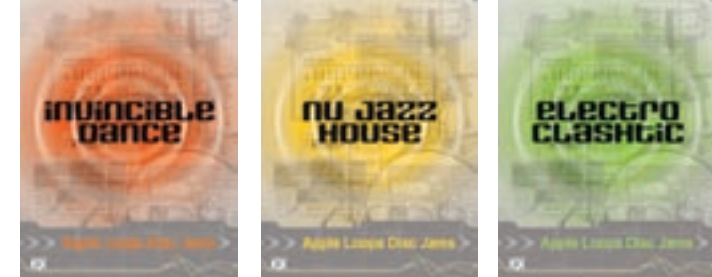


### POWER BARS

Apple scored big when their new recording and production software GarageBand quickly took off. The software's drag-and-drop loop-based app, essentially a more user-friendly version of Apple's Soundtrack software (which works in tandem with Final Cut Pro 4), and its super low price tag (bundled with Apple's iLife software for \$49), made it an instant hit among would-be music producers.

It didn't take long for companies to step up and offer a plethora of samples and loops for the software. Swedish firm **Power FX**, which has provided instrument sounds and loop samples for software by Cakewalk, Propellerheads (Reason), Sonic Foundry, Ableton Live and others, has released three CD-ROMs in the **Apple Loops Disc Jams** series—**Invincible Dance**, **Electro Clashtic** and **Nu Jazz House**—for use with Soundtrack and GarageBand. Each module is designed for the drag-and-drop format used in each (requiring Apple OSX Jaguar or Panther operating systems). Most of the samples are grouped together by sound, as well as key and BPM.

Invincible Dance is the most accessible of the three modules, containing 626 samples to produce club-friendly techno, microhouse, trance, electro and breaks tracks. The big attraction here are the bass samples (most positioned out at an average 130 BPM) and 304 drum loops, widely ranging to suit almost beat need, from a harsh kick drum to a filtered backwards snare or open hi-hat. There are also some impressive mood-creating pad samples, as well as a variety of synths, vocoder and a few FX loops.



The unfortunately named Electro Clashtic nevertheless has an impressive collection of electro-related samples, most notably an eclectic number of sinewy, grimy synths, dark and dirty sounds, crisp synthesized bass and moody, analog-style pads.

Finally, Nu Jazz House features several hundred samples of acoustic and electric instruments, including bass, Fender Rhodes, acoustic guitars and a wide range of crisp, broken beats.

Whatever your musical interest, each module provides a healthy amount of samples to bring those killer tracks in your head to life. *Tim Pratt*

PowerFX Apple Loops Disc Jams MSRP: \$49 each; [www.powerfx.com](http://www.powerfx.com)

### SOFT TALK

You may remember hearing the Sequential Circuits Prophet 5 used in classic '70s and '80s recordings by Journey, Jean-Michel Jarre, Phil Collins and many other new age and soft rock heroes, but electronic artists like Carl Cox and Richie Hawtin (not to mention Mad Professor) have gotten some thick bass and crazy ambience from this machine as well. Native Instruments has reproduced the sound in software format, with subtle additions and improvements. **Native Instruments: Sequential Circuits Pro-53** delivers booming low-end, X-Files-ish harmonies and heavy saw-wave leads, among many other great sounds.

NI's reproduction sounds extremely similar to the real thing—you can even import sound settings and Sysex data from the original Prophet 5 to their version.

In addition to using the Pro-53 as a virtual instrument, you can use it as a plug-in effect. Pre-recorded sounds and other instruments can be sent through its filter section for wild variations of guitars, vocals and drums.

For those of you looking for heavy-duty trance leads to rock your next full moon rave, this is your paint box. For those of you with taste, you too can make some interesting, beautiful sounds. *Jesse Terry*

Native Instruments Pro-53 MSRP: \$199;



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### COME TO THE SURFACE

There's a good reason why musicians formed live bands again in the early '00s: you show up, plug in and rock out. No installing drivers, USB cable latency issues, screens to look at or mouses to move. On the other hand, laptop performers are lucky enough to be able to open up their notebook, launch an app and make noise.

For the latter, the live experience is definitely enhanced by a good control surface such as the **Edirol UR-80 USB Controller**. Useful as an assignable unit for physically manipulating the knobs and faders of your on-screen software, the UR-80 is also ideal for recording instruments (through 1/4 inch and XLR ins), mic'd stuff and MIDI gear (like synths via its MIDI in/out jacks).



Edirol UR-80 USB Controller MSRP: \$545; [www.edirol.com](http://www.edirol.com)

Built to work easily with Reason, Logic, Cubase, Sonar, Digital Performer and Roland MCR-8 applications, all you do is install a driver (upgrades for Mac OSX and Windows are available at the Edirol site), set some prefs on your chosen software application and start playing.

Using the UR-80 with Reason was fun, although you can only control eight channels at a time, whereas you can switch between 32 channels in Cubase or Logic. You can use the UR-80's nifty jog wheel in Reason's MIDI Clock Sync mode to speed up or slow down a track while its playing, but (WTF?!) the BPM window disappears when you do this—so you're basically guessing what speed the track is going. Last gripe: UR-80 is limited to controlling functions on Reason transport (play, stop, record) and the mixer console (faders, EQs, pans)—only limited (on/off) assignments are possible for the rest of the modules. *Boring.*

Final analysis: UR-80 is pretty dope as a controller for higher-grade sequencers (Logic, Cubase, Sonar), and even better as a recording input device for your studio gear. But for a live set, consider other control surfaces out there. *Tomas*

### PEDALING FORWARD

As humanity embraces the evolution of plug-in effects, several analog minded manufacturers continue to develop revolutionary machines. Unlike any other audio effect or pedal ever made, the **TM-1 Ring Modulator** from **Metasonix** creates timbres that cannot be reproduced or modeled by any binary software algorithm.



Unlike that of your typical ring modulator, this unit utilizes three vacuum tubes on an analog circuit similar to that of a vintage guitar amplifier. Adding loads of gain to any line level signal, the first pentode tube can create complacent warmth to brilliant distortion. The following tube generates short pulses triggered by the input and "spits" the modulation onto the audio signal.

Acting as a voltage modulator, this stage generates exclusive manipulation, especially to signals with sharp edges such as square, pulse or sawtooth waves. Finally, the signal passes through a distinctive "beam switching" tube, which forces the electrons in the tube to switch back and forth, developing the quintessential ring modulation effect. Essentially a wet dream for your favorite synth.



From the workbench of the designers at LA's **Studio Electronics** arrives the **ModMax Phaser**—13 knobs, six switches and one pedal. The design of this pedal allows the user to dynamically manipulate four sonic parameters simultaneously (phaser sweep, effect mix, LFO rate and LFO depth), allowing modulation both positive and negative. While most phasers merely apply an ample amount of comb filtering and effect drive, this pedal mates the giant modular synths of yesteryear with the technological efficiency of today.

In addition, Studio Electronics relives the famed filter circuit from the Oberheim SEM with the introduction of the **ModMax Filter** pedal. Hosting a low-pass, high-pass and band-pass filter, any source fed through the input can receive wild harmonic tailoring custom to one's demise. Similar to that of the ModMax Phaser, this pedal offers the same level of effect modulation through the avenue of like-minded synthesis parameters. *Praxis*

MSRP: TM-1 (top): \$399, ModMax Phaser (bottom left): \$349, ModMax Filter (bottom right): \$349; [www.studioelectronics.com](http://www.studioelectronics.com), [www.bigcitymusic.com](http://www.bigcitymusic.com)

### BASS-IC MEASURES

In 1971, Bob Moog released the Minimoog synthesizer to a tepid audience at the NAMM convention. With Moog Music's consent, Arturia has recreated the classic synth as a virtual instrument, with excellent results and a much warmer response at this year's NAMM.



Anyone who's anyone in space fusion and astro-jazz has cemented the classic synth's legacy. Notably, Jan Hammer on the stirring *Miami Vice* theme and Giorgio Moroder on Donna Summer's "I Feel Love." For bass and lead sounds the Minimoog has always been tops. With Arturia's polyphonic re-creation, you can now explore possibilities for harmony.

Like Arturia's other virtual instruments, the **Minimoog V** has exceptional sound. It's worth it when you make the music, but it does tax your processor. For owners of Arturia's Moog Modular V it's not a mandatory purchase, but it's easier to use, with some variations in sound that make you really want it once you hear it.

Unlike the physical version, Arturia's version is MIDI controllable. It has hundreds of presets, an arpeggiator, oscillators that stay in tune, and it isn't noisy and it doesn't cost thousands of dollars on Ebay. Maybe it's not quite as cool as George Duke's plexiglass model from the '70s, but sound and functionality-wise, the Minimoog V could easily put more than one nation under a groove. *Jesse Terry*



### ASK ROBOTSPEAK

XLR8R's readers pose their perplexing gear questions to the music technology experts at SF's RobotSpeak computer music shop. Send questions to [askrobot-speak@xlr8r.com](mailto:askrobot-speak@xlr8r.com) and your answer will appear in next issue!

**Dear RobotSpeak,**  
I've got a nice PC laptop, Ableton Live and some Native Instrument apps. I want to put together a kick-ass live techno set. Is it best to create songs in a bigger arrangement program like Sonar or Digital Performer first, then use those sounds in Live? What's the best small-sized controller for Ableton Live?  
*Hannah Stillman, Seattle, WA*

**Hello Hannah,**  
To answer the first part of your question, if you are using software synthesizers to produce audio for an Ableton Live set then I would strongly recommend a sequencer. Although some stand-alone versions of soft synths have the option to record and export audio files, that's usually the extent of it. Using those same synths as plug-ins to a sequencing host such as Steinberg's Cubase or Cakewalk's Sonar will let you record and precisely edit your MIDI performance before committing it to audio, as well as add real-time effects like reverb, compression, and EQ.

Most importantly, a sequencer allows you to visually organize longer compositional ideas. Take the time to compose ideas, then seek out and create loops based on sounds that orchestrate your intent. Even the most sonically bangin' techno set is made better if it presents a coherent idea, and your audience will notice the effort.

Now let me step down from my soapbox to answer the second part of your question. Evolution's new X-Session UC-17 MIDI Controller is a perfect small-sized controller for Ableton Live. Like its popular predecessor, the UC-16, the X-Session has 16 rotary knobs that can easily be assigned to Ableton Live's parameters. Taking the X-Session a step further, Evolution has added a respectable DJ-mixer style crossfader, finally providing Ableton Live's [or Native Instruments, Traktor DJ Studio] crossfader tool with an apt hardware equivalent.

—Alan Stewart, RobotSpeak

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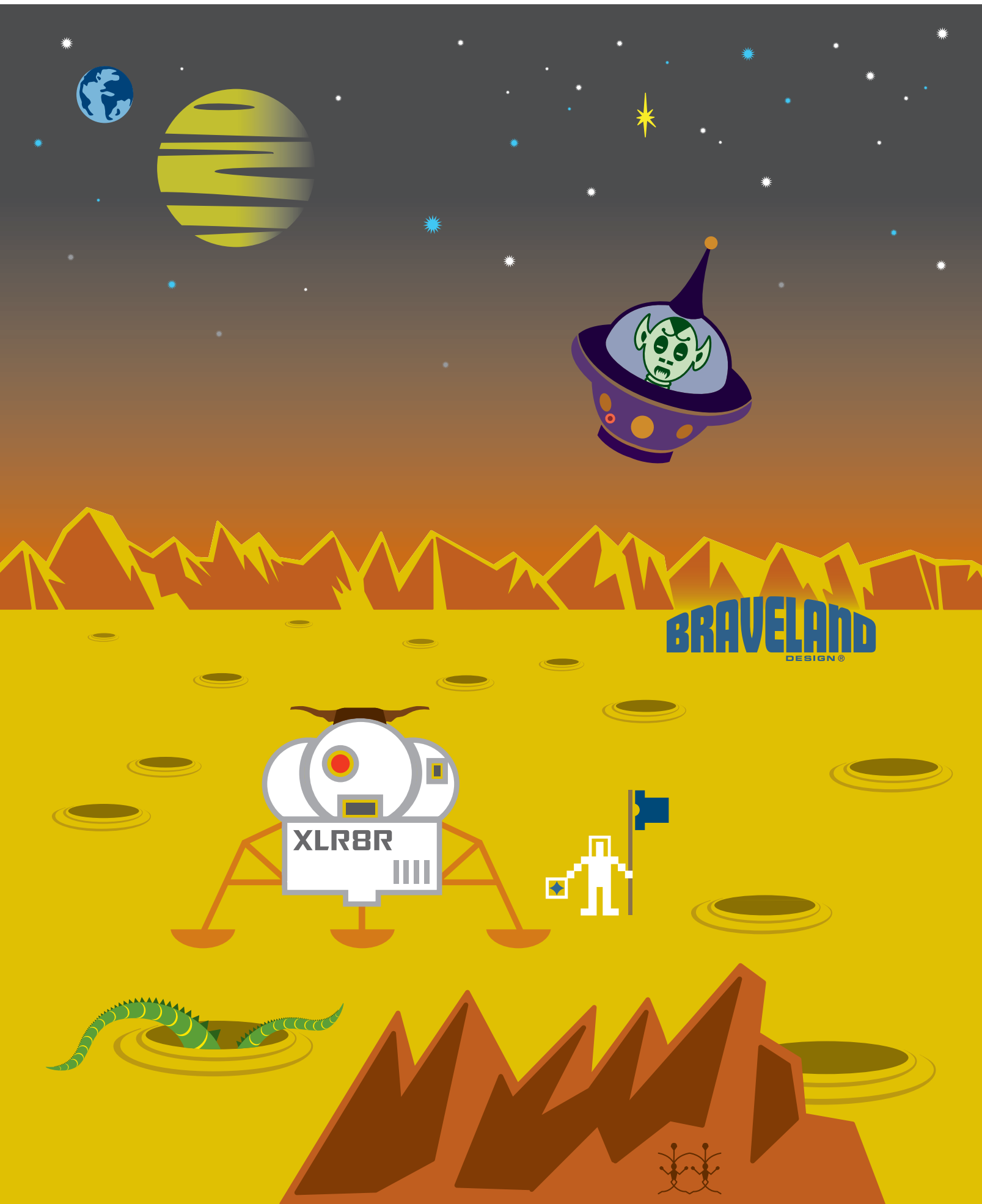


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## VIS-ED BRAVELAND

THROUGH THE MUCK AND MIRE OF INTERNET DESIGN COME BRAVELAND'S JULES VERNE-REFERENCING AND SKATE-READY PRETTY PICTURES. WORDS STEPHEN CHRISTIAN

So you're typing away furiously, working on the latest email that's certain to solidify your multi-billion dollar empire and consequently help you oust Donnie Trump from the next season of *The Apprentice*. Suddenly, an Instant Message window materializes right in the middle of your computer screen. Is it a hot business tip? An IM from that one girl from that one club from that one night last week? No, it's just one of your degenerate friends who thought it would be funny to send you a link to a brand spanking new "barnyard love" website. Great.

With so much garbage adrift on our beloved digital sea—from celebrity porn to every bedroom beat-hacks' version of *The Black Album*—it's difficult to discern what's actually worth spending your time looking at. If you're into graphic design/t-shirts/skateboarding, etc., it gets even more taxing to check out every website with graffiti-influenced, Shockwave-animated trucker hats and the latest cutting-edge turntable t-shirt designs. Yawn.

Texas-born, Cali-dwelling designer Dave Bravenec has discovered the pot of gold at the end of the interweb rainbow. Bravelanddesign.com is Bravenec's store, studio and online playground, littered with his Atari-meets-children's book-meets-skate deck graphics. No one-trick pony, Bravenec has straddled print, clothing and online design for clients such as 2K t-shirts,

Fred Segal, House of Blues, *Skateboarder* and more. Bravenec also ran the risk of his girl getting "dicked by Ricky Powell" by linking up with Beastie Boy Mike D and the Grand Royal squad to overhaul the label, website and magazine's visual aesthetic. Once Grand Royal went belly up like an over-fed goldfish, and the company (along with all those Ben Lee promo CDs) went up on the auction block, Bravenec set up shop for himself with Braveland. Now go get your bookmark on.

**XLR8R:** *What motivated you to split from Texas and head to California to become a big-time graphic artist?*

**Dave Bravenec:** I always felt like Charlie Brown while living in Texas, the misunderstood kid who didn't want to ride horses or work at the local chemical plant. Okay, so I actually ended up doing both, but I also majored in graphic design and my teachers encouraged me to check out the grad design program at CalArts (California Institute of the Arts). It was either exist in the corporate oil well world or move to the land of sun, surf and sin. If you want to work on the more creative projects that are entertainment-based, you need to move out to Los Angeles. Attending CalArts really opened doors for me creatively and professionally. I was introduced to interactive



media and primarily worked on CD-Rom and web design for six or seven years before going out on my own.

**XLR8R: What was your experience like at Grand Royal?**

**DB:** I was at the end of my rope working at this web agency when Grand Royal just fell into my lap. Mike D and party were looking to re-establish Grand Royal as an online magazine, clothing line and record label so they needed a design director who could bring it all together with branding. My strong suit is design identity, so I jumped at the opportunity and had a blast. I've never been too big on working at a company with lots of people hovering over you, or having to clock in at 8AM, so Grand Royal allowed me to get used to working from home and keeping my own hours. It prepared me for the next phase of my career: Braveland, a clothing label and freelance studio.

**XLR8R: Explain the ideology behind Braveland.**

**DB:** Braveland is based on cryptoculture, the investigation of hidden phenomena and graphical elements that are myths and marvels. This is subject matter I grew up with in the '70s as a kid watching *In Search Of* or reading Jules Verne novels. I've done Braveland for two years now so each year I have developed a theme for the designs I do. The first year was geological: caverns and lost civilizations. Year two was aquatic: sea monsters and forbidden islands. This year will focus on space travel and alien life

forms. By creating an ongoing theme, it gives me a direction with where to go with the aesthetics of the label. I always tell other designers that are starting their own clothing label to try and incorporate a consistent subject matter to your designs. After a while folks will begin to recognize your line in stores, and it makes life easier for the designer to keep developing new work when they hit year four.

**XLR8R: Aside from the cash, what's the difference between doing work for large companies (Sony, NBC) and smaller ones?**

**DB:** I've mostly done projects for large companies, especially when I was a creative director at an interactive studio. I not only had to appease the client but the owners of the company I worked for. Smaller companies have been a more one-on-one experience but, like most designers, I tend to work too much on those projects since there is more freedom. I guess it's fate, but brands like Ocean Pacific and *Skateboarder Magazine*, which I grew up with in Texas, turned out to be smaller projects I would later work on when I moved to LA.

**XLR8R: You've done some skateboard graphics. Is skateboarding something that influences or informs your work?**

**DB:** I just completed the Los Angeles board design for the Hessenmob Skates series Metromob. The design is a giant reptilian carrying off a surfer into a polluted sunset. I

grew up skateboarding and racing BMX in Texas. The senior high school football team helped me build a skateboard half-pipe in my backyard, so the world of skateboarding will always be appreciated by me. I would actually like to do some designs for snowboards and move up to even larger items like swamp air boats.

**XLR8R: You sell t-shirts on the website. Do you anticipate a backlash against graphic-heavy tees?**

**DB:** You mean graphic-heavy tees that won't download fast enough on a dial-up modem? No, I'm not in the least worried because I usually get the response that my designs are very minimal and simple. I've stayed away from doing designs that take up every square inch of the shirt body where you can't even tell what color the shirt is anymore.

**XLR8R: What are the best and worst responses you've ever had to your work?**

**DB:** It's all been pretty civilized. Lots of young designers email me on where to get labels printed or good stores to contact, and I'm more than glad to help out. Sometimes I hear from individuals that Braveland is kind of way out and not streetwear enough like some other brands. Most people comment that the designs are intelligent and challenge the viewer to interpret what's going on. There is a strong undertone of humor incorpo-

rated in my overall vision that I want buyers to have a good chuckle at.

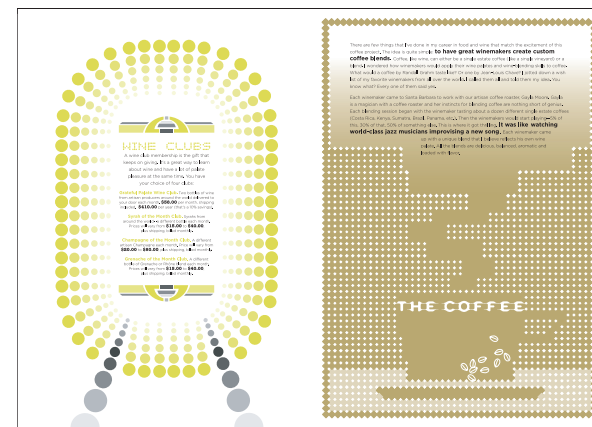
**XLR8R: What's the current Braveland soundtrack?**

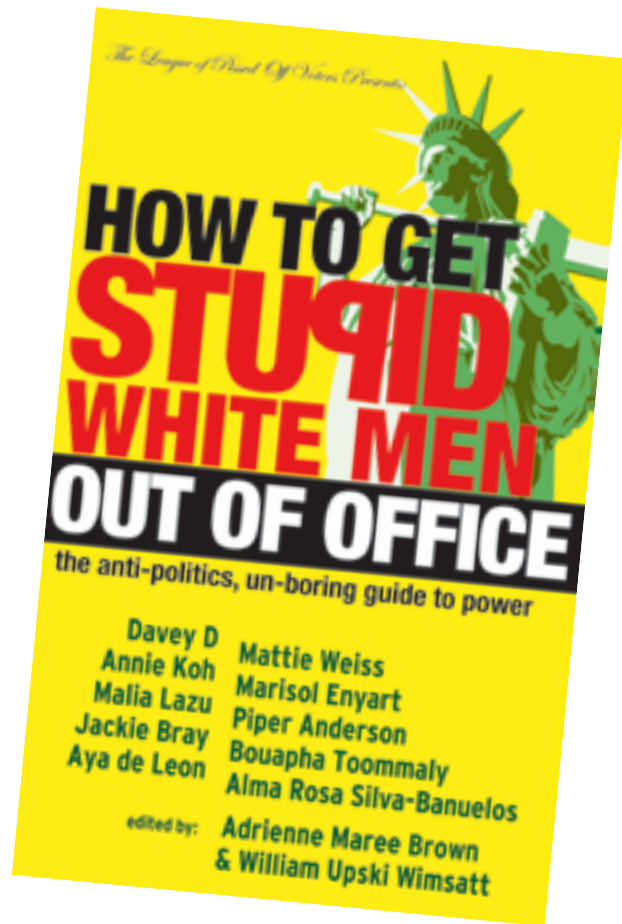
**DB:** I'm a big '60s psychedelic garage rock fan. Everyone should seek out the classic gem by The Action, *Rolled Gold*. Play the song "Brain" like 50 times in a row. Amazing! Current music would be The Soundtrack of Our Lives, Spiritualized and Mogwai.

**XLR8R: What projects do you have on the horizon?**

**DB:** I'm working on the identity and web site for the Shambhalla Feng Shui Institute and will be developing the identity and label for a new imported beer from China. I plan on doing more custom-cut designs for Braveland, like a women's and children's t-shirt, a unisex handbag and embroidered sweaters. I also have several ongoing projects I do for the Grateful Palate and Studio at Fred Segal.

[www.bravelanddesign.com](http://www.bravelanddesign.com)





## TBC VOTE YOUR CONSCIENCE

"WE'RE READY TO KICK SOME RIGHT-WING ASS": AN INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM UPSKI WIMSATT WORDS SCOTT THILL

His graffiti name used to be Upski, before he hung up the paint cans and committed his mean-streets opinions to paper. Next came DIY polemics like *Bomb the Suburbs* and *No More Prisons*, rough-and-tumble rants on hip-hop hypocrisy and the pointless penal system. Along the way, William Upski Wimsatt became a fixture in high-cred pubs like *The Source*, *Chicago Reader*, *Utne Reader* and the *Chicago Tribune*. Now Wimsatt, hip-hop historian Davey D and a posse of multi-cultural political activists have formed an organization called the League of Pissed Off Voters, and they're taking dead aim at the 2004 election in a new book, *How to Get Stupid White Men Out of Office*. Utilizing several clever strategies that have already helped swing national and local elections, this Justice League plans on changing the world using the only superpower available to humans—the vote.

**XLR8R: I guess the first question is how did so many stupid white men get into office in the first place? Did they rig it?**

**William Upski Wimsatt:** This government was created by and for property-owning white men. So we've come a long way, baby. But not that far. Last time I checked, there's not one Black or Latino person in the US Senate.

**XLR8R: What's the best way to get stupid white men out of office?**

**WUW:** Yo, all I gotta say is read the book. It tells 20 stories of young progressives winning or swinging elections. There's a 24-year-old black woman named Alisha Thomas, who won a State Representative seat in suburban Cobb County—Newt Gingrich country—by putting her home phone number on 60,000 flyers and returning every call. That's just one story.

**XLR8R: Why do you think Americans take their democratic process for granted?**

**WUW:** I can't blame people who didn't vote before. I didn't vote myself until I was 27. But this Bush thing is a whole new bowl of shit. Now we don't have a choice, and if we lose, he's going to appoint three Supreme Court justices, and there really won't be any more choices after that. We have to play to win this time.

**XLR8R: Talk about where the idea for this book came from.**

**WUW:** The League of Pissed Off Voters, we're like the Wu-Tang Clan of electoral politics. People know me as a writer, but I'm secretly a talent scout. I scouted the illest political artists and organizers from all over the country. Davey D, who is one

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of the co-authors, interviewed everybody for his radio show. The co-authors are women like Marisol and Alma Rosa, two Latina sisters from the Southwest. Alma helped pass New Mexico's clean money campaign, while Marisol organizes United Students Against Sweatshops in the Southwest. Malia Lazu started [get-out-the-vote organization] Boston VOTE—she's one of the most talented political organizers in the country. Piper Anderson is a fly spoken-word artist who's touring with We Got Issues. They're about to blow up. Then we have Mattie Weiss and Jackie Bray, two bad-ass white women from the Midwest.

Then there's Annie Koh and Bouapha Toommaly, both Asian Americans. Annie wrote our South Korea piece, where kids used the internet to swing a presidential election and elect a human rights activist. Bouapha is a legendary environmental-justice organizer from Laos. Then there's Aya De Leon, whose extraordinary piece is about Puerto Rico, where they have a 90-percent voter turnout. Finally, there's Adrienne Maree Brown, the other co-editor of the book—she's one of the most brilliant people alive.

But it's not about us. The League of Pissed Off Voters is not a cute artsy book tour thing. Folks are building chapters across the country, and creating local voter blocs. Our web platform, [Indyvoter.org](http://Indyvoter.org), is going to revolutionize the way young people do electoral politics the way Napster revolutionized music.

**XLR8R: Where does this book fit into your body of work? Is it another attempt to speak truth to power?**

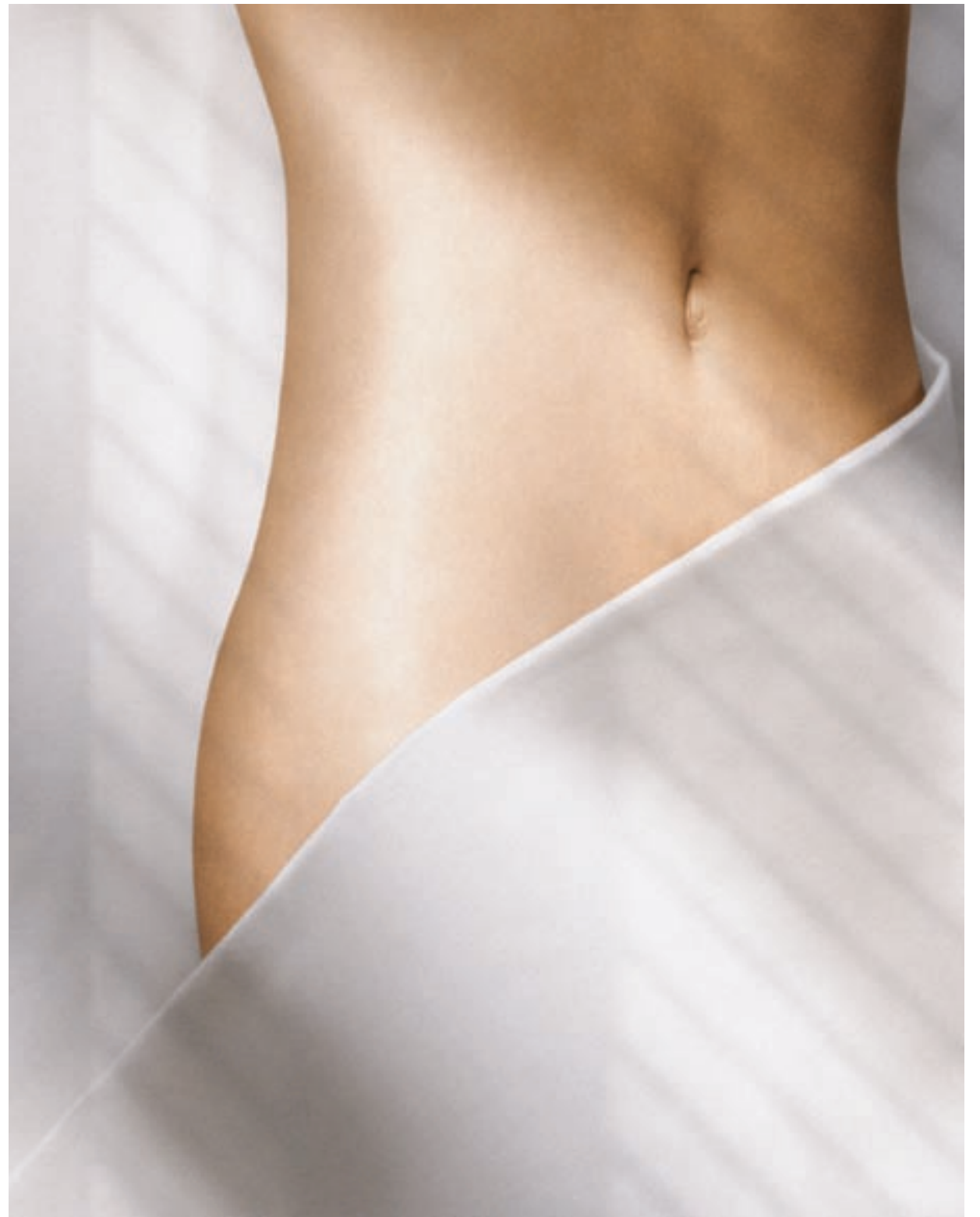
**WUW:** Nope. Power ain't interested in truth. It's a book for the rest of us about how we win anyway. People are tired of losing. We're ready to win, and kick some right-wing ass. This is by far my favorite book I've ever worked on. I had no interest in electoral politics until a few years ago when it became clear that this election is going to be so close that a few thousand—or even a few hundred—votes could swing it. In 2000, six states were decided by less than 8,000 votes each! So we're telling people this is a national emergency. Your state could be the Florida of 2004.

**XLR8R: What's next for you?**

**WUW:** I'm going to write a book called *How to Get Stupid White Men Out of Office and Teach Them to Breakdance*. That's the future for our little Georgey Boy. First he spoke Spanish, next he's going to rap. And after he gets booted off stage, he and Karl Rove are going to move to Massachusetts so they can get married and discover their true selves. That would be a happy ending.

[www.indyvoter.org](http://www.indyvoter.org)

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